34 pages of tutorials inside!

Master fantasy scenes
YongSub Noh explores atmosphere and depth

Tips for portraying emotions
Francisco Albert demonstrates how to successfully capture anger

Learn to paint epic exosuits

Learn to paint with photos
Donglu Yu reveals how to capture mood

Generate ideas in Photoshop
Kick-start the creation process and learn to paint with ease

+plus
• 10 of the best digital images
• **The sketchbook of Mike Butkus**
• Paint hard-surface environments
• **and much more!**

The art of
matte-painting
Framestore matte-painter **Jason Horley** reveals his industry experiences and shares his incredible portflio inside!

Editor's Letter

JESS SERJENT-TIPPING
Deputy Editor

Welcome to the December 2013 issue of *2dartist* magazine!

We're rounding off the year with a mix of sci-fi engines and exoskeletons, rural and regal fantasy lands and a collection of works from some of the brightest and most prolific artists of the past year.

Adorning our cover for the final issue of the year, we have the work of Framestore's Matte Painting Supervisor, Jason Horley. Jason has worked on some of this year's biggest cinematic releases, including *Gravity* and *47 Ronin*. This issue he shares some of his industry knowledge with us, along with his cracking portfolio!

Also inside you'll see how Albert Ramon Puig created his incredibly detailed 80s-inspired exoskeleton. Enjoy!

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Contributors

JASON HORLEY
Digital Matte Painter Jason Horley has worked huge titles such as *The Dark Knight*, *Harry Potter*, *Gravity* and *47 Ronin*. He currently works as a Digital Matte Painting Supervisor at Framestore.

RICHARD TILBURY
Originally trained as a fine art painter, Richard Tilbury now works as a freelance concept artist and illustrator and has contributed to many notable published works, following his in-house role at 3dtotal.com.

MIKE BUTKUS
Mike Butkus is one of the leading conceptual artist for movies, TV shows, video games and toy designs for the entertainment industry. He has worked on over 3,000 projects in the last 20 years.

DONGLU YU
Donglu Yu is a senior concept artist working at Ubisoft Montreal. She has worked on titles such as *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*, *Assassin's Creed III*, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.
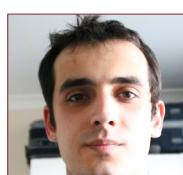
FRANCISCO ALBERT
Francisco Albert doesn't remember when he first started painting, but admits that he'll be painting for the rest of his life. Originally from Spain, he now resides in London..
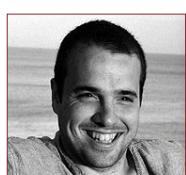
ALBERT RAMON
Albert Ramon Puig works as a professional in the game industry, designing the UI and creating Concept Art. He spends most of his free time drawing concept art and 3D modeling.

YONGSUB NOH
YongSub Noh is a self-taught, 3D animation artist from South Korea. He currently works for NCsoft and enjoys playing PC games, the drums and working on concept art in his spare time.

DIMA GORYAINOV
Dima Goryainov is a concept artist and illustrator focusing on environmental design. He recently worked at Microsoft Studios/Turn 10 on the visual development of *Forza Motorsport 5* for Xbox One.

Your Magazine.

Get the most out of it!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature within this magazine, then follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

Top tips for viewing

For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD**

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2dartist magazine, you can set the reader to display "two-up", which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the **View** menu, then **Page Display**;
3. Select **Two Page Scrolling**, making sure that **Show Cover Page in Two Page View** is also selected.
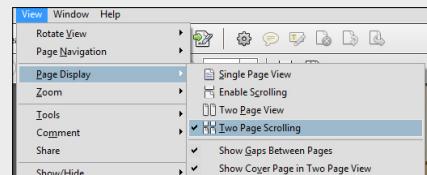
Jump to articles

In the Contents pages, we have direct links to all articles within the magazine. If a certain article catches your eye, simply click (or tap on handheld devices) on the page number within the Contents, and you will be taken straight to that article.

Download resources

Whenever you see this symbol, be sure to click it to download free resources to accompany that article!

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2dartist magazine is available as a downloadable PDF magazine. If you have an iPad or iPhone, you can drag your magazine into your iTunes library – it will automatically add the PDF to your bookshelf in your iBooks app!

Contents Issue 096

The Artist

Jason Horley

Web: jasonhorley.carbonmade.com

Interviewed by:
Jess Serjent-Tipping

Digital matte painter Jason Horley
has worked on huge titles such
as *The Dark Knight*, *Harry Potter*,
Gravity and *47 Ronin*. He currently
works as a digital matte painting
supervisor at Framestore.
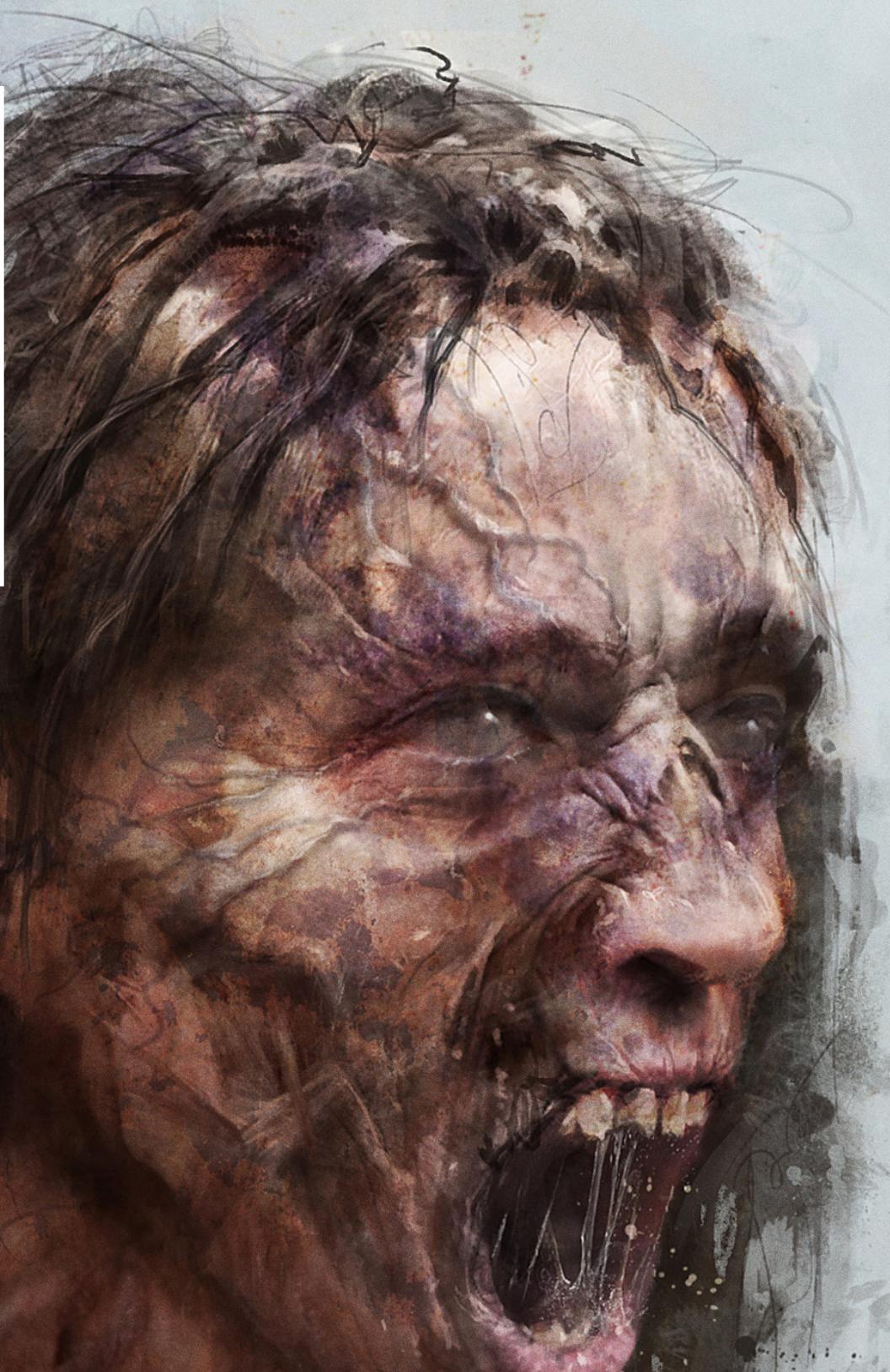
Matte painting at Framestore

With a career that spans over 40 films and TV series, including the *Harry Potter* film franchise, Disney's *Tarzan* and Alfonso Cuaron's incredible feature, *Gravity*, we were excited to catch up with Framestore's digital matte painting supervisor, Jason Horley to chat about his experiences in the industry ▶

Digital matte painting supervisor Jason Horley takes us through his experiences in the world of traditional and digital painting. Originally a traditional-medium book illustrator in the 1990s, Jason has since worked his way up through projects such as Disney's *Tarzan*, *Troy*, five *Harry Potter* films and the more recent *Gravity* and *47 Ronin*, finally settling on a position at Framestore in London as a digital matte painting supervisor. He talks to 2dartist about his journey through the art realm and his evolution into the prolific, highly-regarded matte painting artist he is today.

2dartist: Hi Jason, thanks for talking to 2dartist! To kick things off, could you please tell us a little about yourself and your career?

Jason Horley: Hi, and thanks for having me. I'm the matte painting supervisor at Framestore in London. I started out in the early 1990s as a book illustrator, then joined Walt Disney Feature Animation as a background painter and stayed there for about five years. I joined Framestore in 2000 and have been there ever since.

2da: Could you walk us through the creation of one of your works? What software and processes do you use?

JH: When I was at Disney, we were painting backgrounds traditionally, using acrylics on watercolor board and clear plastic cells. Towards the end of my time there, we started working digitally with Disney's in-house software; Deep Canvas, which enabled artists to paint in 2D onto 3D objects.

When I started at Framestore, I used Photoshop, which is what I continue to use today, along with Maya and NUKE. A typical matte painting shot now will start in Photoshop but then the painting will be projected onto 3D geometry, enabling the camera to move around the matte painting in 3D. When I work on a concept painting, I normally start out in Maya and get something rough in 3D, then take that render into Photoshop and paint on top.

2da: How long does it take to have a piece ready for film, from concept to final image?

JH: It's not easy to say how long a concept painting will take, as it's not about the execution of the work, but about the idea. So an initial sketch that takes minutes has an equal chance of getting approved as a series of paintings that go through many changes over many months.

● Still life painting – oil on canvas © Jason Horley
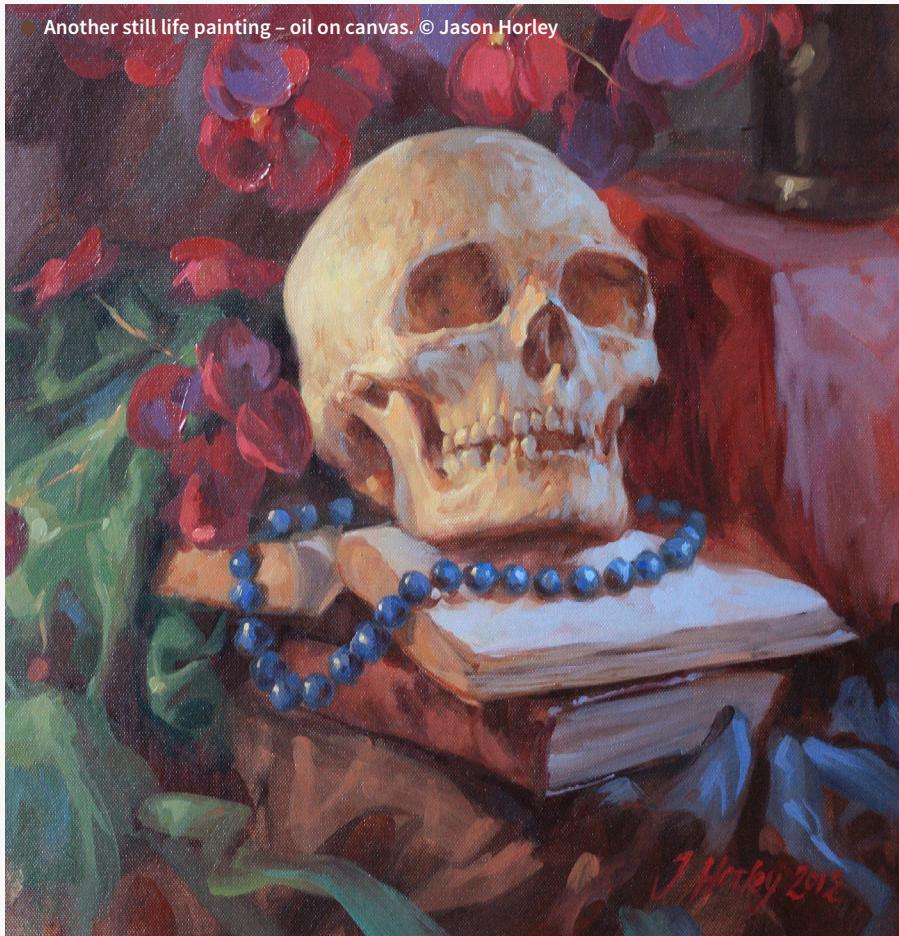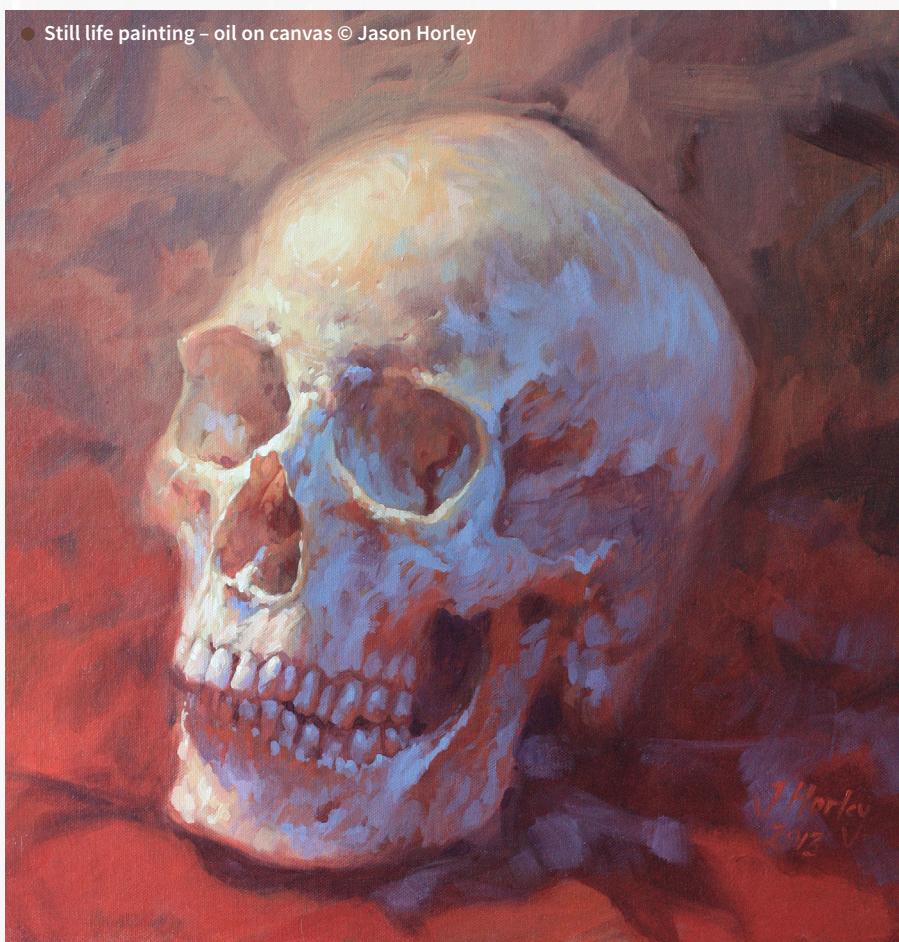
Another still life painting – oil on canvas. © Jason Horley

"Unless you know and understand the rules and techniques of traditional drawing and painting, you will always be limited to what the computer can do"

Jason Horley 2012

Life drawing class in Bethnal Green, London – pencil on paper © Jason Horley

A matte painting on the other hand, is easier to estimate. A simple matte painting would take a day or two, while a complex one could take a couple of months. But if we think about how long it takes from the initial concept to the film being finished, we are potentially talking years.

2da: You have worked as both a traditional and a digital matte painter, what would you say are the positives and negatives of each medium?

JH: That's an interesting question. There are pros and cons for both mediums. I've been working now for twenty years. The first ten I worked traditionally, and the last ten digitally. I'm glad I had the opportunity to work traditionally, but for a film pipeline, working with computers is generally faster and much easier to make changes to (and clients always want many, many changes). Since working digitally I had begun to neglect the traditional techniques, but a few years ago I started figure drawing classes again in the evenings, and doing oil paintings for myself at home. I had forgotten how much I had missed traditional work. Now I keep my digital techniques for professional work and traditional painting for my own pleasure.

2da: How important do you feel mastering traditional painting is to being a successful digital matte painter?

JH: Personally, I consider this to be extremely important. Of course, using computers is essential to work in film, but computers are just a tool, like any other. A computer can give you impressive results, but unless you know and understand the rules and techniques of traditional drawing and painting, you will always be limited to what the computer can do. When you understand the rules and theories of perspective, color, light, etc, you can take anything the computer renders out and push it further. The strongest matte painters and concept artists I have seen have a traditional set of skills as well, and this knowledge enhances their digital work. I recommend anyone using computers to create digital art in any form to take time to draw and paint traditionally as well. Figure drawing classes are ideal as this means that you are drawing from life, within a restricted time period. It's hard, but you have to stick with it.

2da: Which artists have inspired your work?

JH: When I worked at Disney I had a mentor called Joaquim Royo Morales. Joaquim is a great painter, and was happy to share his knowledge with me. He took me right back to basics and showed me how he paints; establishing color, light and values first, in broad strokes, and leaving detail until the last moment. That revolutionized my way of thinking and is the single most important lesson of my career.

2da: You have worked on some amazing projects; do you have any particular favorites?

JH: I've worked on about 40 films and TV shows to date. There are a few titles that stand out as particular favorites. I loved working on Disney's *Tarzan*. I was fortunate enough to be given some hard shots that pushed my skills to the limit and I learned a lot during that production.

I've worked on most of the *Harry Potter* movies, although at the time I probably didn't appreciate them as much as I should have. After seeing *Harry Potter* all day every day for 10 years I'd had enough. I watched them all again recently with my two daughters and really enjoyed them.

⏱ Artist Timeline Jason's career up to this point

1996: Hired by Walt Disney Feature Animation as a background painter.

2000: Hired by Framestore London as a digital matte painter.

2003: VES award (Visual Effects Society) won for Best Matte Painting in a Televised Program.

2005: Promoted to digital matte painting supervisor at Framestore London.

2007: Emmy nomination for Outstanding Visual Effects for a Mini-Series.
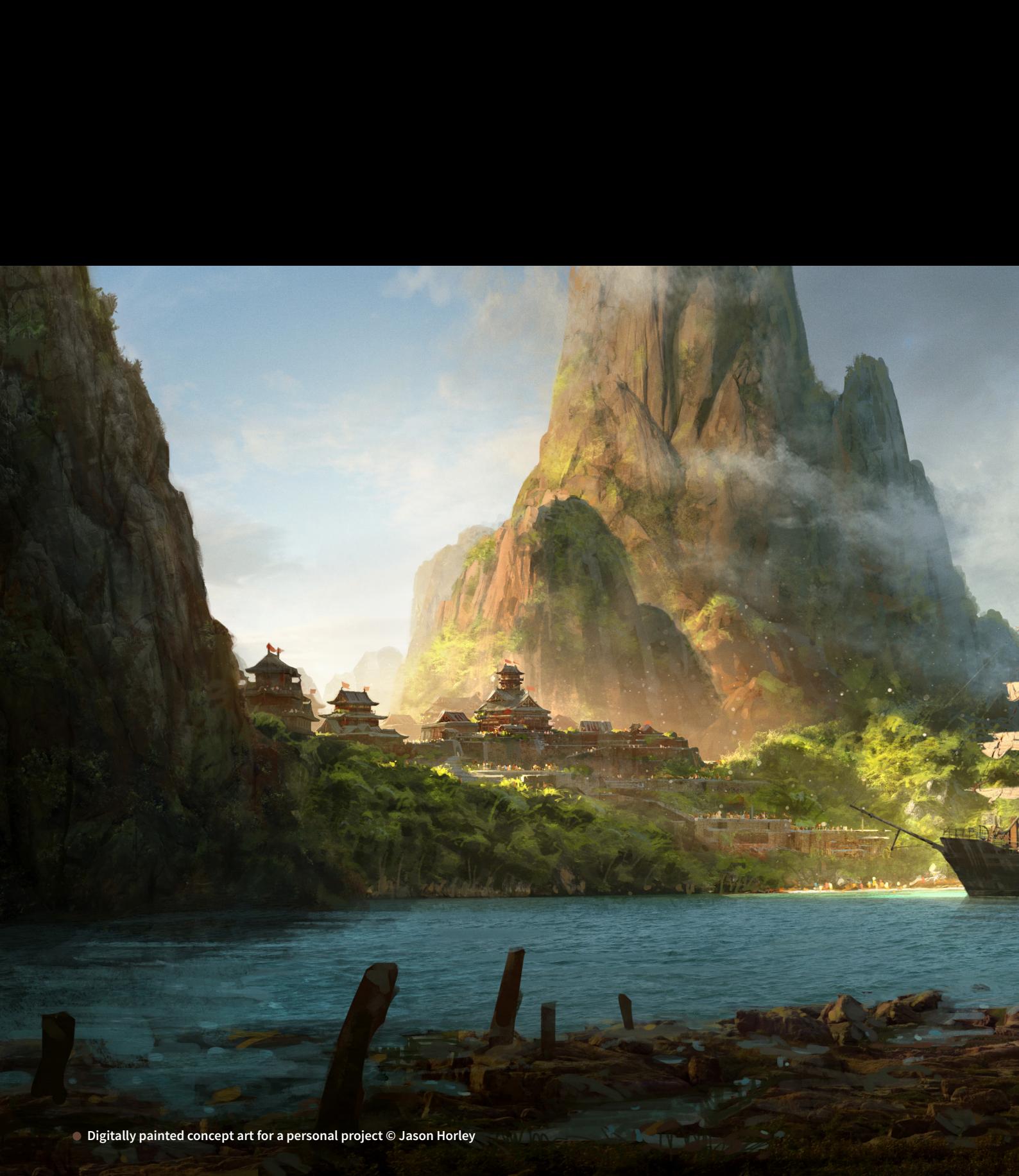
Digitally painted concept art for a personal project © Jason Horley

Jason Horley 2012

● **'Winter'** – concept art digitally painted for a personal project © Jason Horley

Having a few years to distance myself from the world of Hogwarts helped.

More recently Alfonso Cuaron's *Gravity* was released. I'm a big fan of anything space-themed, or science fiction movies, so I'm happy to have worked on this film.

2da: What help and advice would you give to an aspiring painter who would like to break into the film industry?

JH: There certainly are jobs there if you look. You just have to know which particular area you want to focus on and concentrate on that. Smaller companies tend to hire more generalists, while larger companies are more likely to have specific

departments, so that's something to consider when applying to studios. You'll need to have the appropriate portfolio. There are many online sites that can help with tutorials and guides.

Try writing to employees who are working in departments that interest you. You may find that many will be happy to reply with advice, just don't trouble them too much if you don't get an immediate reply, as they may be busy!

⚡ **PRO TIP**
Don't jigsaw paint
Try not to paint in sections. By that, I mean starting a small area and working it up to a finished level and then moving on to the next area, continuing to do your painting in little patches until you've covered your work area. If you do this, you will struggle to make the painting work as a whole, because when painting, it will be hard to keep color and value relationships harmonious across the entire canvas. The result runs the risk of looking very stiff and contrived. Leave detail until the last moment, and only put detail where necessary.

● **Digitally painted concept art for an independent movie © Jason Horley**

It's often a case that getting to know someone in the industry is an easier way to get your work seen than applying online through company job listings. Be realistic in terms of your skill level. If you're new to the industry, don't ask for a ridiculously high salary as this will prove very negative. Be willing to get hired at an appropriate salary and skill level, prove yourself, and work your way up once you are within a team.

2da: You've had an awesome career, but do you still have any big goals you hope to achieve?

JH: I would like to go back to feature animation one day. I enjoy animated movies by Studio Ghibli, DreamWorks, Pixar and Disney. I like the freedom animated movies have, and the opportunity to create a distinct visual style to tell a story. They're like moving paintings.

2da: If you weren't an artist of any kind, what do you think you would be doing?

JH: Well that's a hard one to answer. To be honest I was a lazy teenager who preferred to play *Elite* on his Commodore 64 rather than study. I didn't get serious about studying until art school. There isn't really anything else I have a particular talent for. When I started out as a freelance illustrator it was tough. Illustration jobs were infrequent, and the pay wasn't very good. It got pretty bad at one point so I started applying for other jobs: children's photographer, lollipop man (crossing guard), cleaner – all completely random jobs. I didn't get offered anything I applied for. Then one day Disney called, and that was my lucky break.
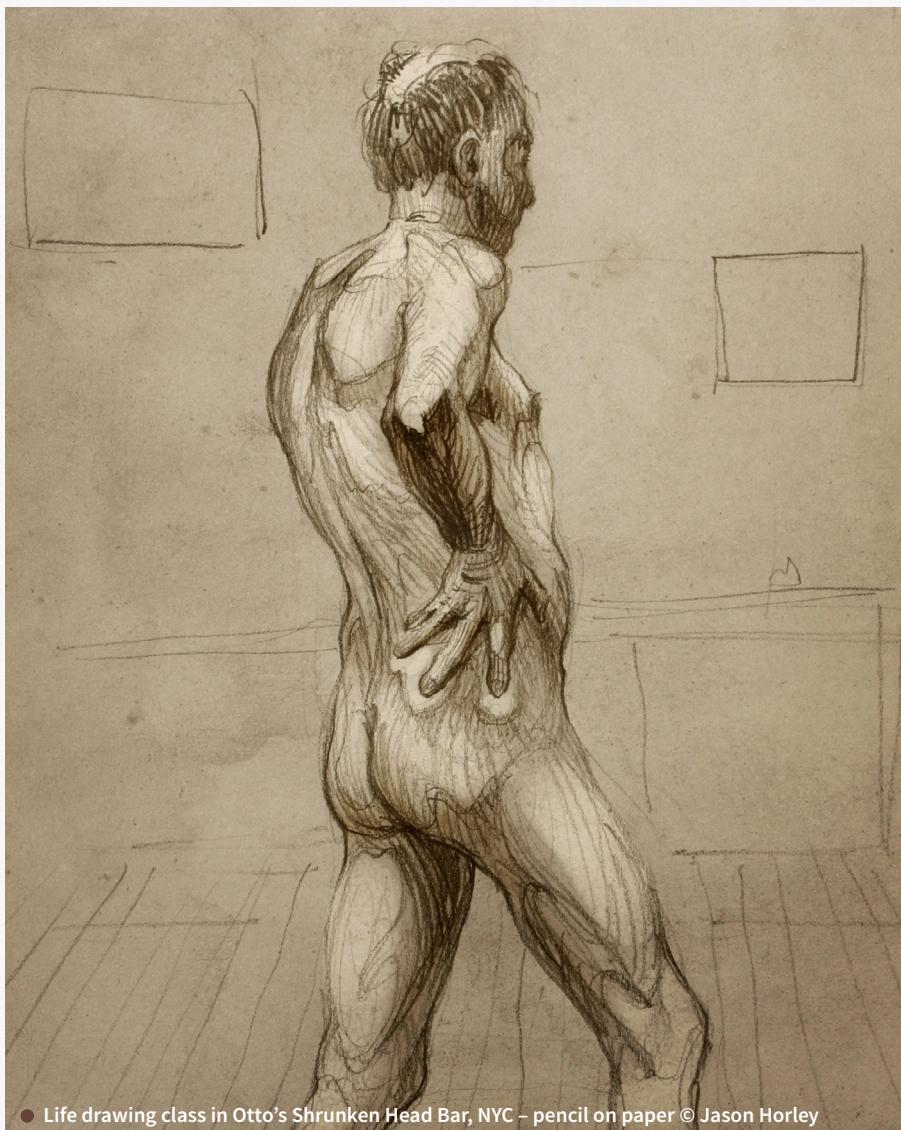
● **Life drawing class in Otto's Shrunken Head Bar, NYC – pencil on paper © Jason Horley**

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MIKE BUTKUS

Sketchbook

Leading concept artist Mike Butkus talks to 2dartist about the ideas behind some of his most iconic images. He gives us a breakdown of his preferred materials, personal techniques and most treasured inspirations in this revealing peek into his huge digital portfolio

The Artist

Mike Butkus
Web: mikebutkus.net

Mike Butkus is one of the leading conceptual artists for movies, TV shows, video games and toy designs for the entertainment industry. He has worked on over 3,000 projects in the last 20 years.

SKETCHBOOK OF MIKE BUTKUS

Prolific concept artist Mike Butkus divulges some of the key images in his digital sketchbook...

I'm a professional artist and I sketch for a living but I've always enjoyed drawing ever since I can remember. Since I was a kid, drawing has always been an excellent way for me to record all the kooky characters and creatures wandering around in my head. I loved creating things that didn't exist whether it be alien environments, vehicles, steam-punk gadgetry or creatures. As an adult, to my pleasant surprise, I realized I could actually make a living doing it.

Inspiration and ideas
I get inspiration from my kids, traveling, quirky friends and my weird dreams.

Sketching techniques
My favorite technique is drawing with a black Prismacolor pencil and hard graphite on Dura-lene because the combination of these mediums produces a smooth and creamy texture to the drawing. You don't have to work hard to create the depth and value of your lines when using this specific vellum. The downside is the expense of the paper. ▶

01 In this drawing I used the technique I mentioned earlier. I started off with a sharp black Prismacolor pencil on Dura-lene paper with about twenty or more sheets underneath to create a little bounce under the pencil. Once the drawing was complete, I scanned it into Photoshop to saturate the tone and values, spending no more than a couple of minutes on it.

02 This is an acrylic painting that was in the running for the movie poster of *Django Unchained*. It was done with acrylic paints, airbrush and color pencils on a gesso-covered Masonite board.

> **"Drawing has always been an excellent way for me to record all the kooky characters and creatures wandering around in my head"**

01

Sketchbook of Mike Butkus

Materials

For my color work I use cold-pressed illustration boards, acrylic and oil paints, gouache and Prismacolor pencils. For my drawings I use black Prismacolor pencils, graphite 9h mechanical pencils and Dura-lene paper. ●

---

03 This illustration is from my book, *How To Draw Vampires*. It was done in acrylic paint, airbrush and color pencils on a Masonite board.

04 This painting is the cover art for my book, *How To Draw Fallen Angels*. I hired a professional model for the photo shoot so I had excellent reference to paint from. I first did a very tight drawing of him then made a photocopy of it and mounted it on a Masonite board. I then proceeded to paint right on top of it.

05 This scary zombie was done for my *How To Draw Zombies* book. This is a black-and-white drawing on Dura-lene that was then scanned into Photoshop and lightly tinted.


03

04
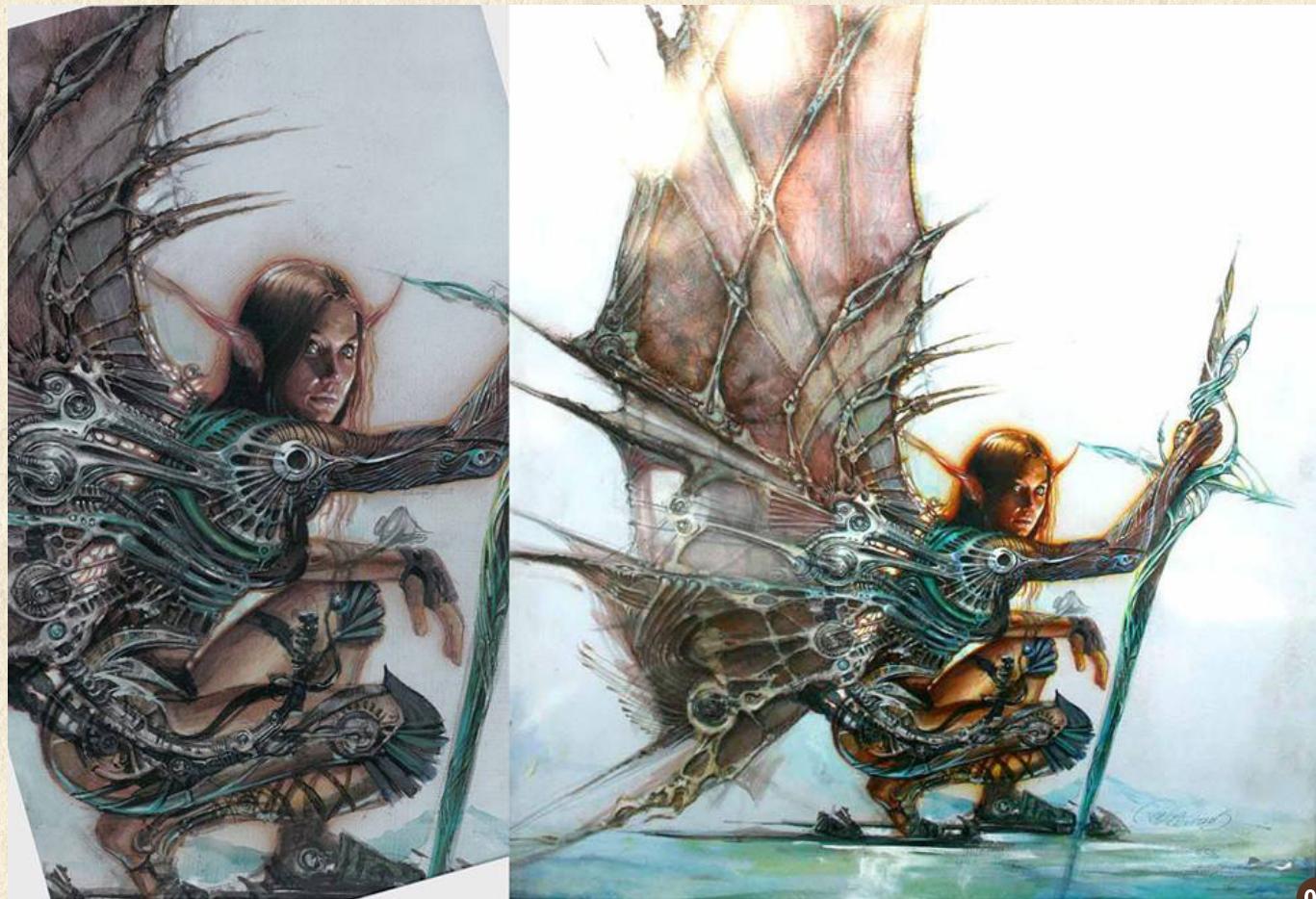
06

⚡ PRO TIP

Building up values using water

Mix a lot of water with very little pigment to slowly build up the values.

● This was a character design illustration using airbrush, color pencil and graphite.

07

06 This illustration was a class demonstration on character design, texture, color, mechanical and organic shapes. One of these days I will find the time to finish it.

07 This drawing was done on a 15"x 20" sketch pad using a black Prismacolor pencil and black gouache washes.

08 This drawing is for my next book on drawing and character design. Sometimes I like to complete each part of the drawing as I work my way down. It was done on Dura-lene, using Prismaclor pencil and gouache washes.

09 Here I played around with some ideas for Creature X.

⚡ PRO TIP

Sketchbook paintings

For these creature designs I use pen and ink, watercolor and gouache. I start off with my pen, drawing big simple shapes and keeping in mind the design of the shapes and lines. All the preliminary sketching creates interesting forms and textures for the overall picture. I don't try to fight the changes that take place. Sometimes allowing the initial sketching to come through is just as important to the mood of the drawing as the color work itself.

One trick I used to create the brilliant highlights is painting the area with gesso and then using acrylic dyes over it.

MIKE BUTKUS
Creature DEMO

08

09
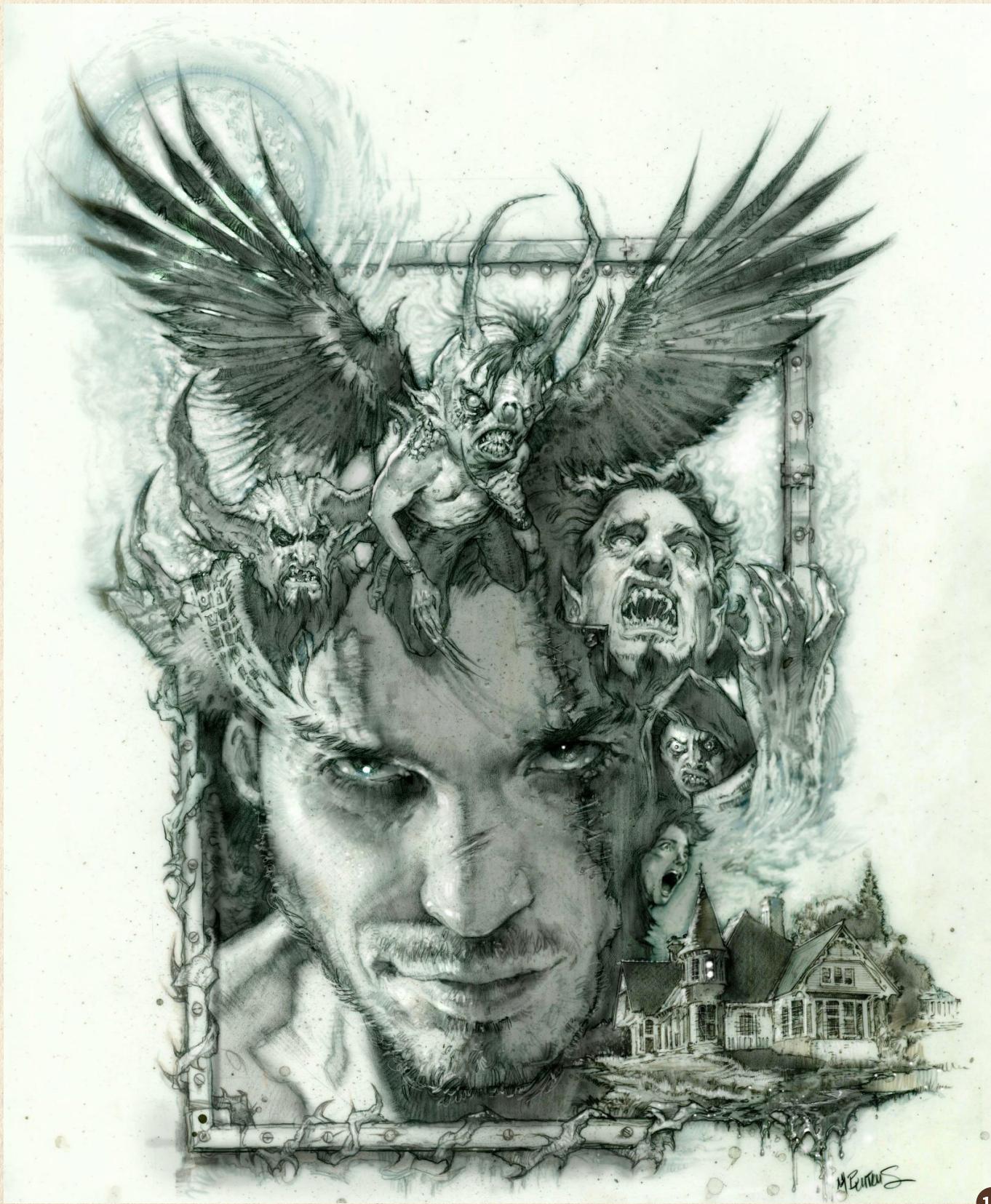
10 This drawing is from my *How To Draw Fallen Angels* book. This black-and-white illustration is an example of how I would go about doing a movie poster or book cover art.

11 This was part of a series of drawings I did for the latest Riddick movie for their online promotional ad campaign.

VIN DIESEL
RIDDICK
RULE THE DARK
SEPTEMBER 6

2dartist

Would you like to see your sketches featured in 2dartist magazine?

We're always on the lookout for talented artists and their artwork to adorn the pages of our magazine. If you think you have what it takes, get in touch!

To submit, simply email Jess at **jess@3dtotal.com** with a selection of your images or a link to your portfolio online, plus a little information about you.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Art **Gallery**

Each issue the 2dartist team selects 10 of the best digital images from around the world. Enjoy!

Unicorn
Byzwa Dher
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: arte-grafik.com

Submit your images! Simply email **jess@3dtotal.com**

Station

Massimo Porcella

Software used:
Photoshop

Year created: 2013

Web: behance.net/MassimoPorcella
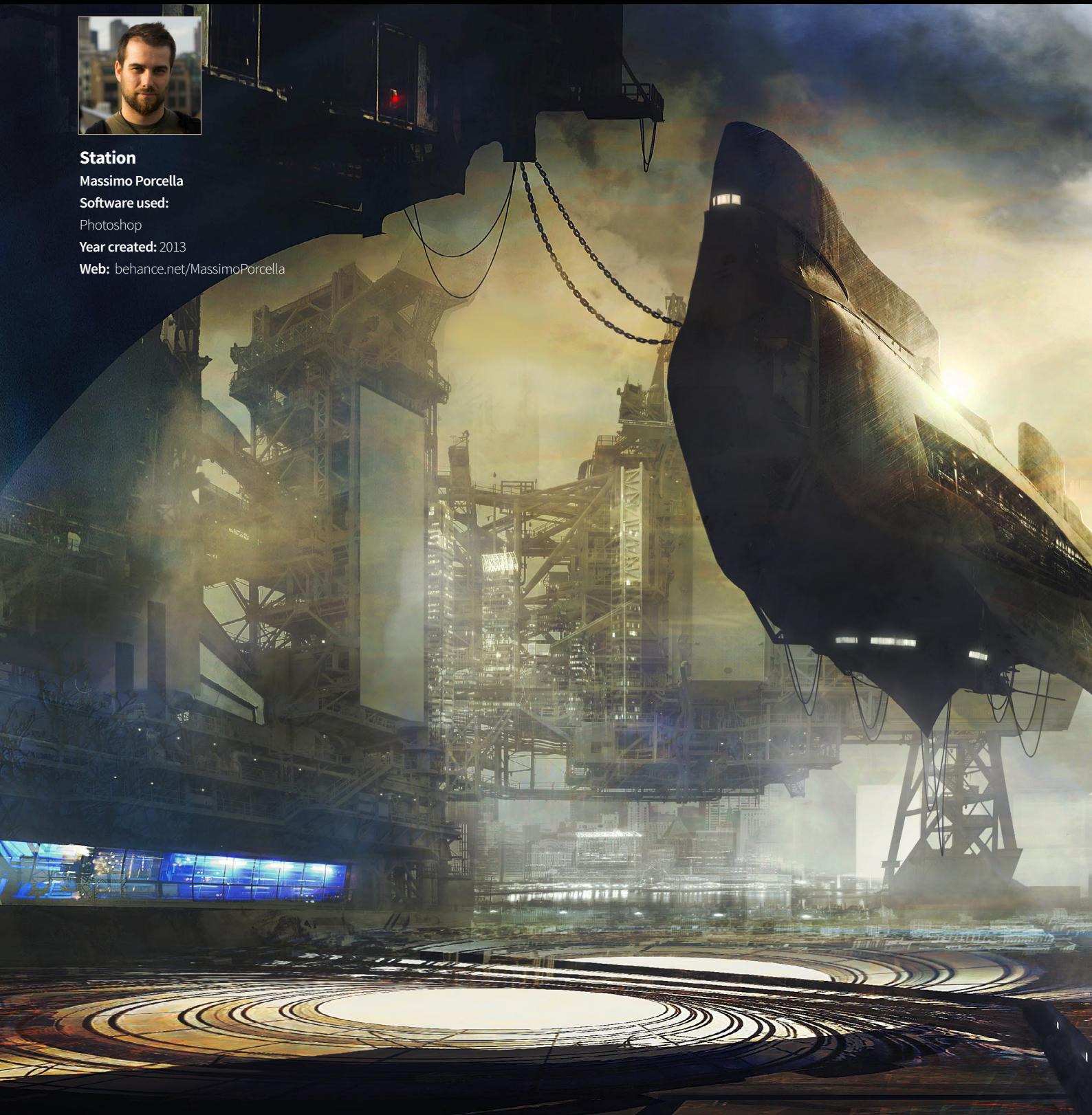
The Thief
Augusto Goicoechea
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: toonsketching.blogspot.co.uk

Pilot Little
Aekkarat Sumutchaya
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: facebook.com/Webang111
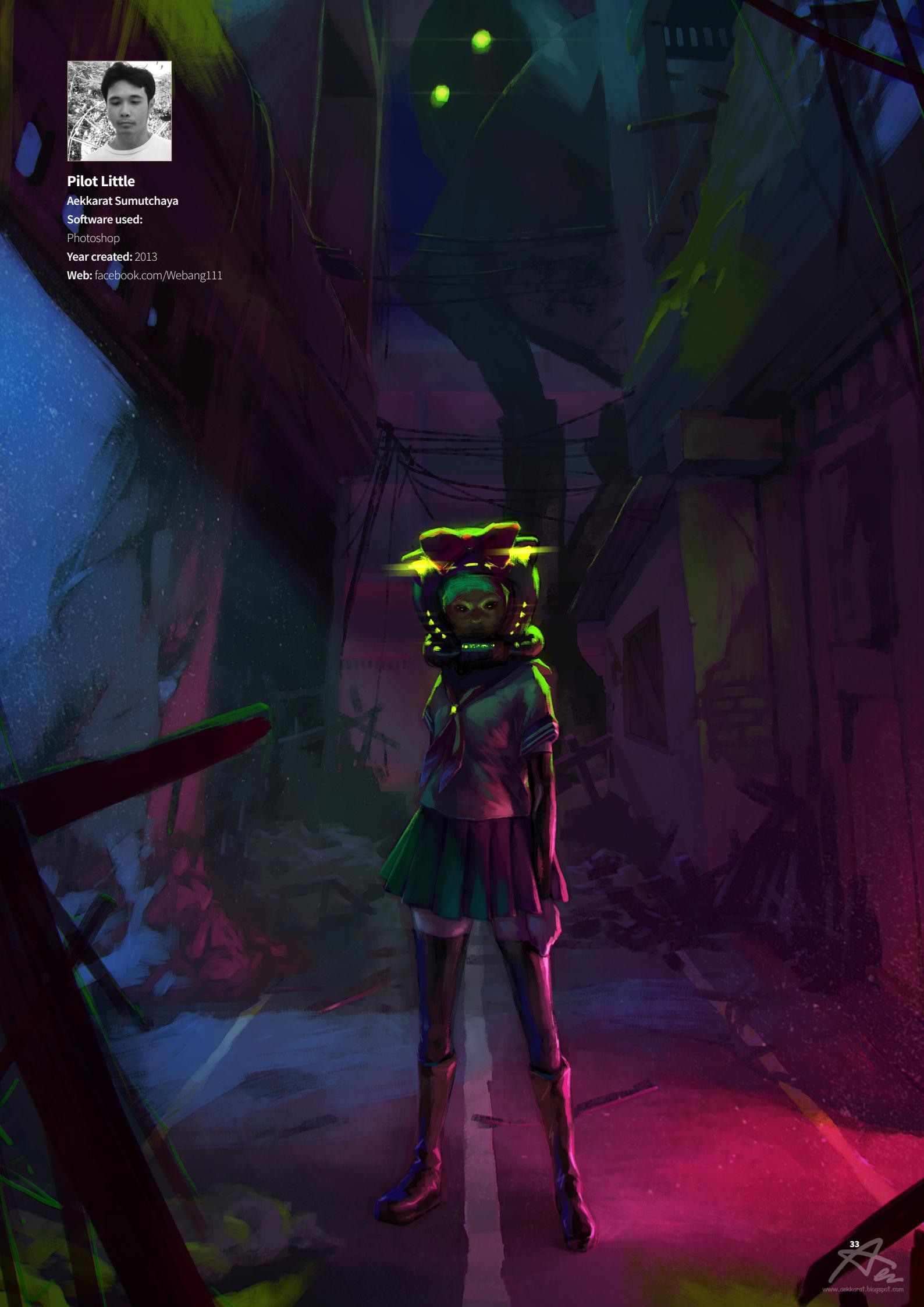
Corpus Delicti / Disquisition II

Oliver Wetter / Fantasio

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2013

Web: fantasio.info

$E=MC^2$

Reborn
Piotr (piofoks) Foksowicz
Software used:
Photoshop and Wacom
Year created: 2013
Web: piofoks.deviantart.com

Viking

Ilker Serdar Yildiz

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2013

Web: ilkerserdar.com

Diver

Fuad Ghaderi

Software used:
3d-Coat, Keyshot, Photoshop

Year created: 2013

Web: facebook.com/fuad.ghaderi

Stormtrooper
Pavel Romanov
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: cynic.cghub.com

Wind
Tejfel Krisztian
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: facebook.com/TejfelKrisztianPainting
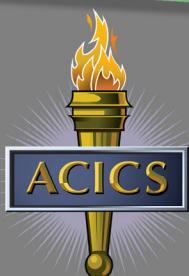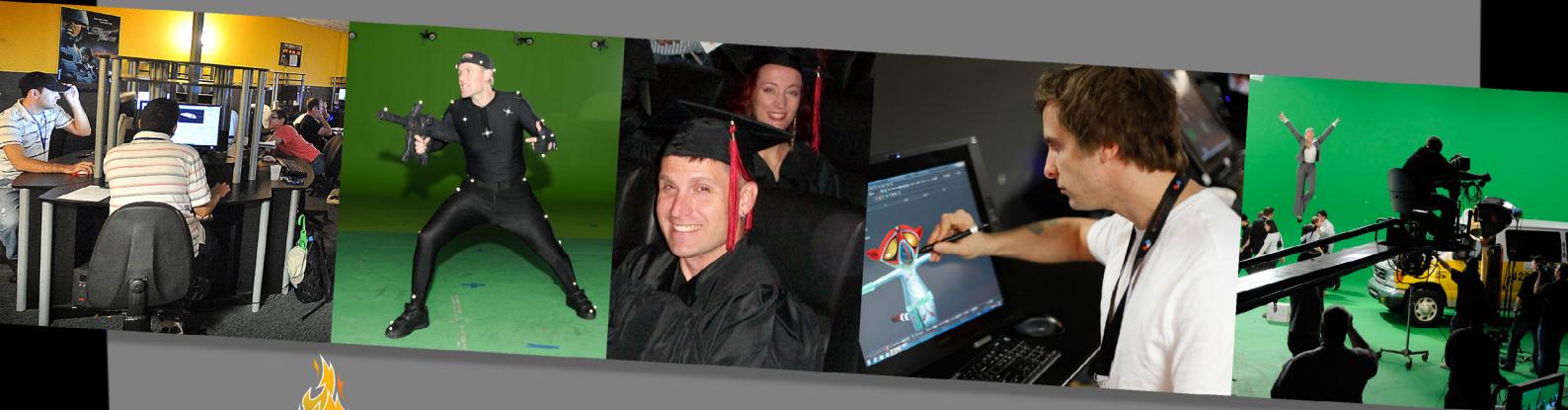
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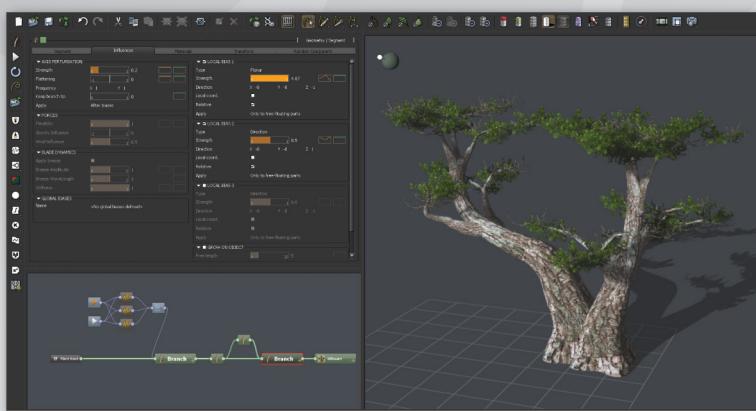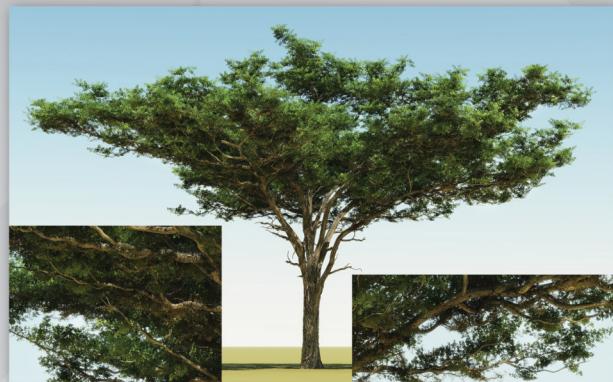
The Artist

Francisco Albert
Web: tatitati.deviantart.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Francisco Albert doesn't
remember when he began
painting, but admits that he'll
be painting for the rest of his
life. Originally from Spain, he
now resides in London.

Learn how to communicate emotion

Francisco Albert takes us through the tricks and techniques used in creating the impression of an angry character. In this breakdown, Francisco approaches the scene in an abstract fashion in order to capture some of the lively anger in the brushstrokes ▶

Francisco Albert reveals how he creates characters that display emotions and moods…

I only have two techniques, or tricks if you want to call them, that define my workflow: paint with attitude and take many short breaks to refresh your point of view. I think it's important that a painter has an attitude or perspective in creating artwork.

When I paint, I will think deeply about each individual element, but with a great concern about simplification and abstraction. In a nutshell, you might say that I don't paint a subject, instead I approach it. I think that abstraction is at a higher level than simply adding detail, and in all professions, can provide a more elegant solution with a deeper understanding. This is because you don't just see the problem that's in front of you; you see a more generic problem, with potentially much bigger dimensions.

01 **Moods:** My first step is always the same; defining moods – it's my ritual. I think that an artist that makes moods as a standard part of his practices is bound to be a great artist. Moods are key, as they provide me with an opportunity to learn about colors, play with abstract shapes, improve my strokes, pick abstract ideas, increase my imagination and intuition, and learn about brushes and textures. I enjoy them a lot.

For this tutorial/artwork I create around ten of them. All of them have potential, but as this tutorial will be focused on a portrait, I carry on with the middle one – the angry face – as this picture has the most possibilities, and the best color range.

02 **Pick a mood:** From the previous selection, I have to say that my favorite mood is the right-hand image as it has a nice form and quiet feeling. This isn't the right mood for this tutorial though.

> **"Occasionally, I'll find that I feel too rigid when defining the proportions, shapes, textures and hair with characters"**

My concern at the moment is having fun with my picture and making it interesting for myself. Occasionally, I'll find that I feel too rigid when defining the proportions, shapes, textures

⚡ PRO TIP

Be an artist

Don't repeat yourself – the first impression of any picture is one of the entire scene. This is because this world is very fast. Don't work from photos to avoid copying and limiting your own vision, and spend more time painting and developing experiments than on marketing your image on social networks. Always have in mind that the picture on which you have spent so long working on can also finish in the bin if the idea is no good. Be dynamic, because a complete artist should always avoid painting with the same style and the same ideas. Try new things.

and hair with characters. Sometimes I enjoy landscapes or sci-fi more, where everything can be whatever you want. For that reason I focus more on the attitude and the technique in the image, rather than getting the details in. It'll be more productive if I enjoy creating the image, rather than just following the standard workflows. ▶

01 This shows a sample of the many moods created for this tutorial

02 Don't focus on details as soon as you start the image or you'll lose control over the rest of the picture

03 **Avoid complexity if possible:** I find that my work can turn into a pain if I define the mouth too soon. The mouth encompasses many elements: teeth, wrinkles, light spot, complex lips, tongue, and so on. Painting all of this is not a problem – the problem is that if I include them now, my picture is bound to make me go into details, and I don't want that, so I decide to find a new idea for this part.

Details are not only about technique, they are about time, patience, zooming in and using small, useless brushes that you only use for very specific textures. At this stage, they are not productive.

04 **Depressive moment:** After changing the facial expression, I start to get a little concerned about the pale and grey color of this picture. This is the first personal challenge I've encountered in this picture. It's the perfect moment for a break, to think objectively about how to solve this issue and come back full of energy for this step.

During my break, I remember the cover of a very special book: *The Art Spirit*. This cover shows a very simple and expressive portrait that has very
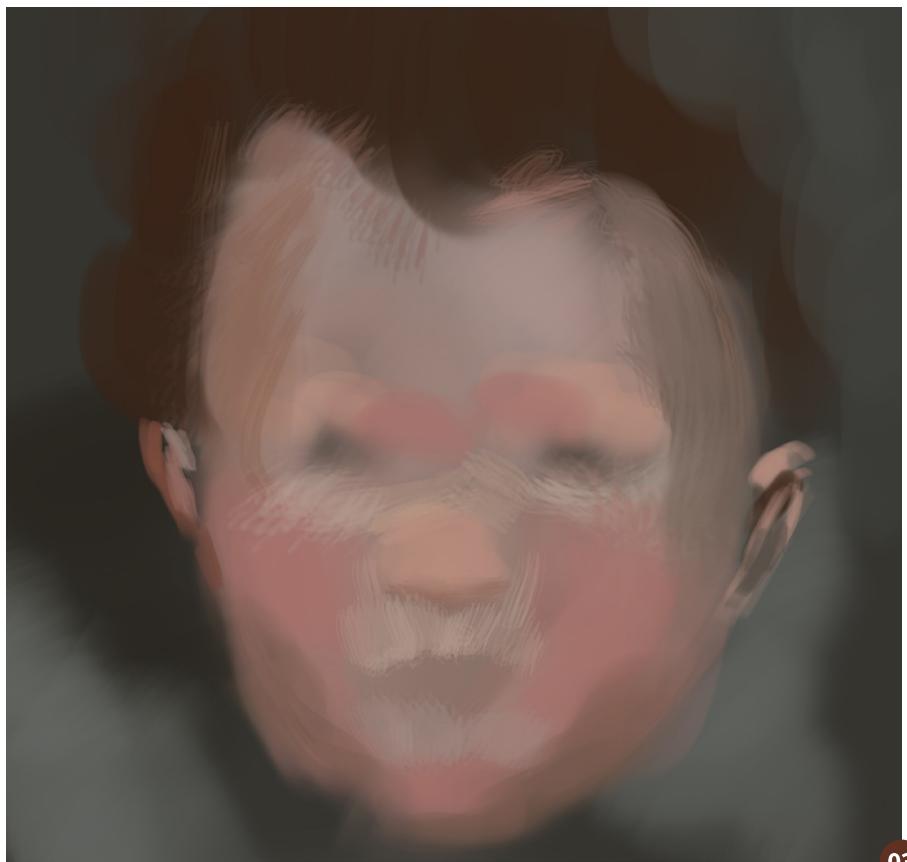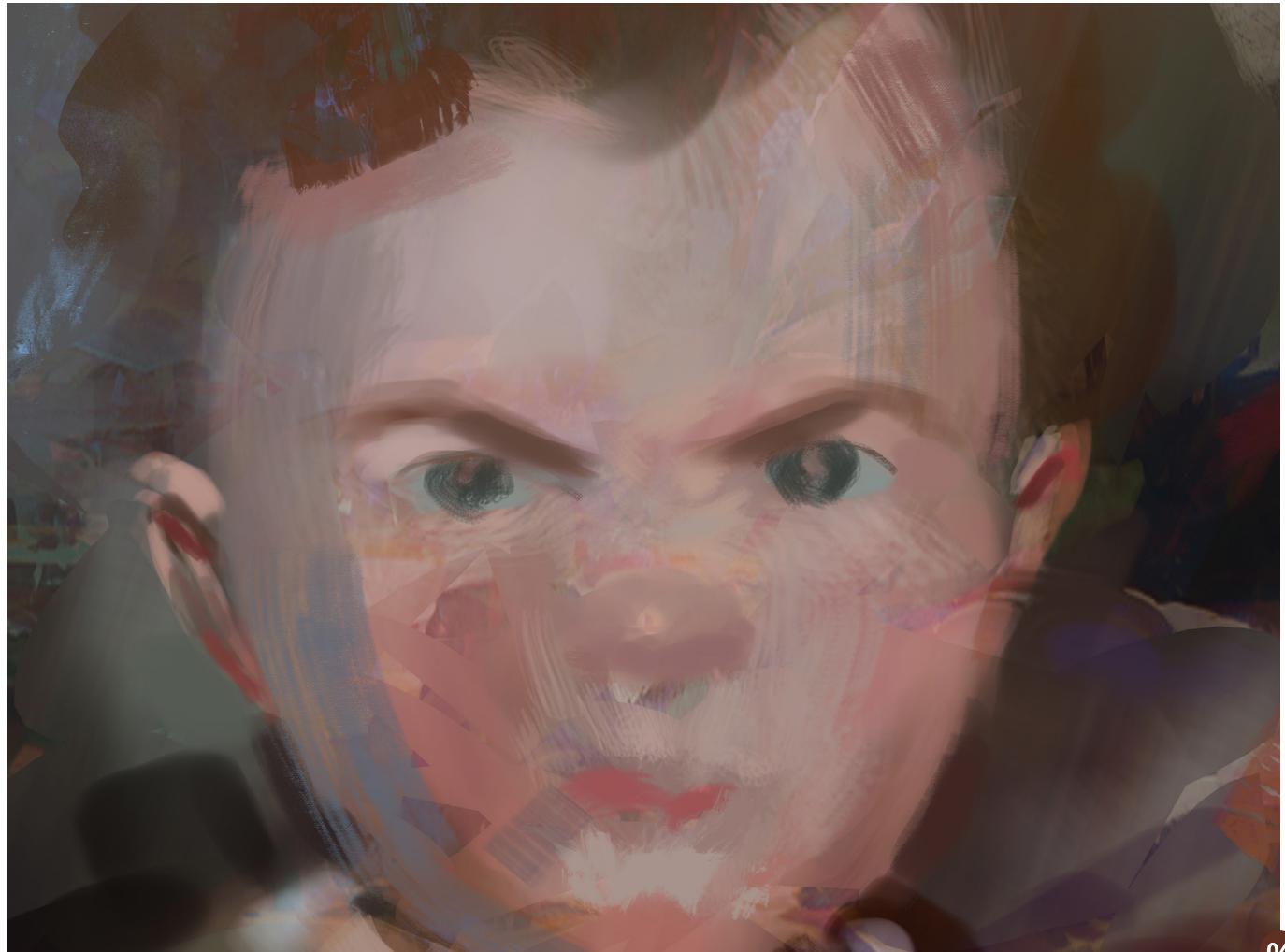
few details and texture, but still holds something interesting in the eyes and the lips. They somehow give life and coloring to the rest of the face. I try the same in my own image.

05 **Regain control over the color:** I usually start my pictures with neutral colors in order to mimic reality, but in this case I started with a bad combination of neutrals: too cold and too grey.

My idea is simple; I want to regain control over these colors, but that doesn't mean I need to create an amazing color scheme. My idea is more basic, and for the moment it's enough that I have a stable scheme that lets me play with the image later on.

I continue working with very generic brushes: round, square, nothing special. I don't want to mix strokes to make a soft, smooth-rendered picture – that is a trap that forces you to go into details. Actually what I want is to be focused solely on the essential elements of the picture, so I won't paint what is not necessary.

06 **Play with colors:** The colors are now under control, so now is a great time to experiment with them. In moments like this, I like to try out different moods that I've already created in other experiments. This is, in effect, my personal gallery of textures, colors, noises, etc.

In this case, I realize that I want to increase the warm feeling.

07 **Light:** This step is simple. In a different layer I set this texture and apply Soft Light. This is a good point at which to explain how I work with layers. I have to say that I work with no ▶

05

06

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03 Francisco rarely uses lines when he paints: lines mean control, boundaries, limits, details, and accuracy

04 Francisco's picture is dying in this step; the colors are not playing, so he needs to do something to bring it back to life

05 His colors are starting to come back, and now that they are under control it's time to experiment

06 Francisco uses different kinds of blurs to create different effects

07 As the colors are already painted, the work curve will be more relaxed from now on
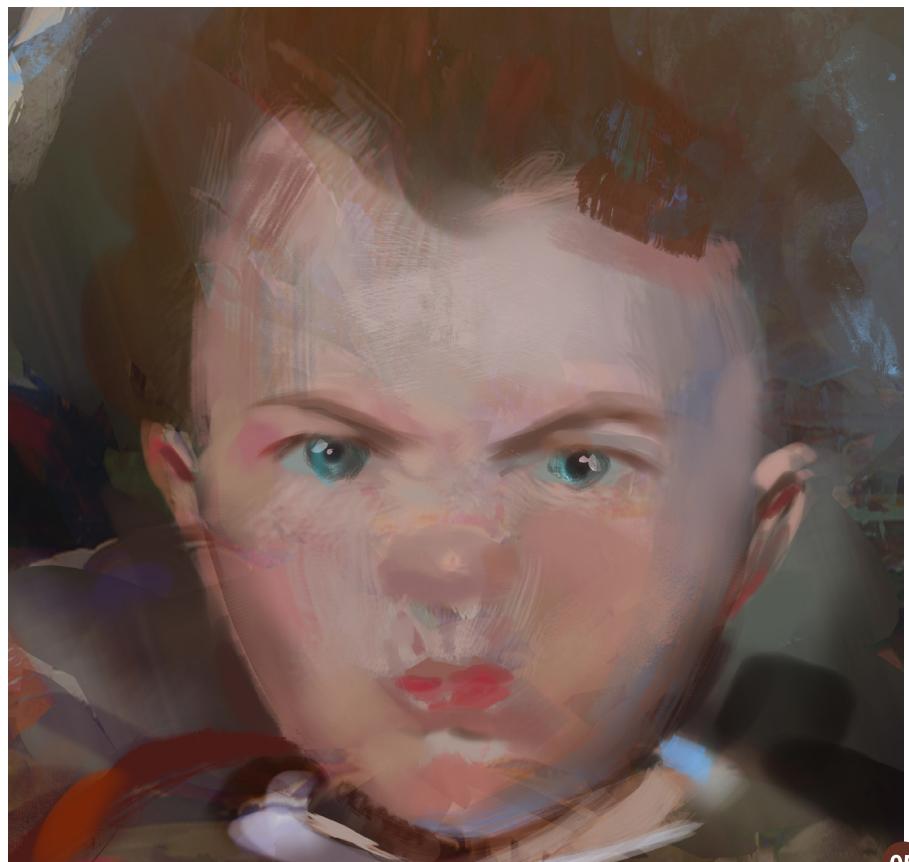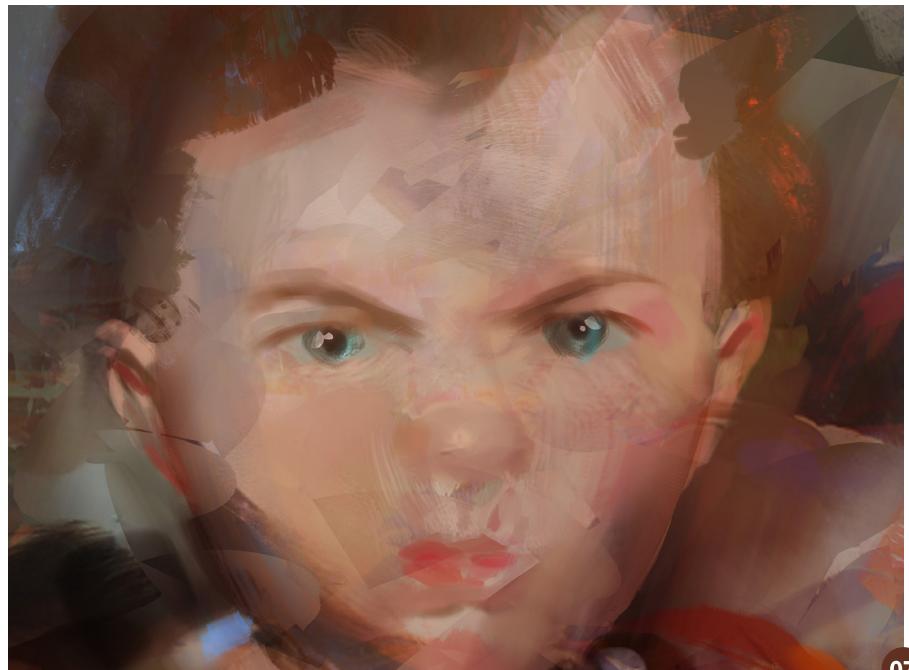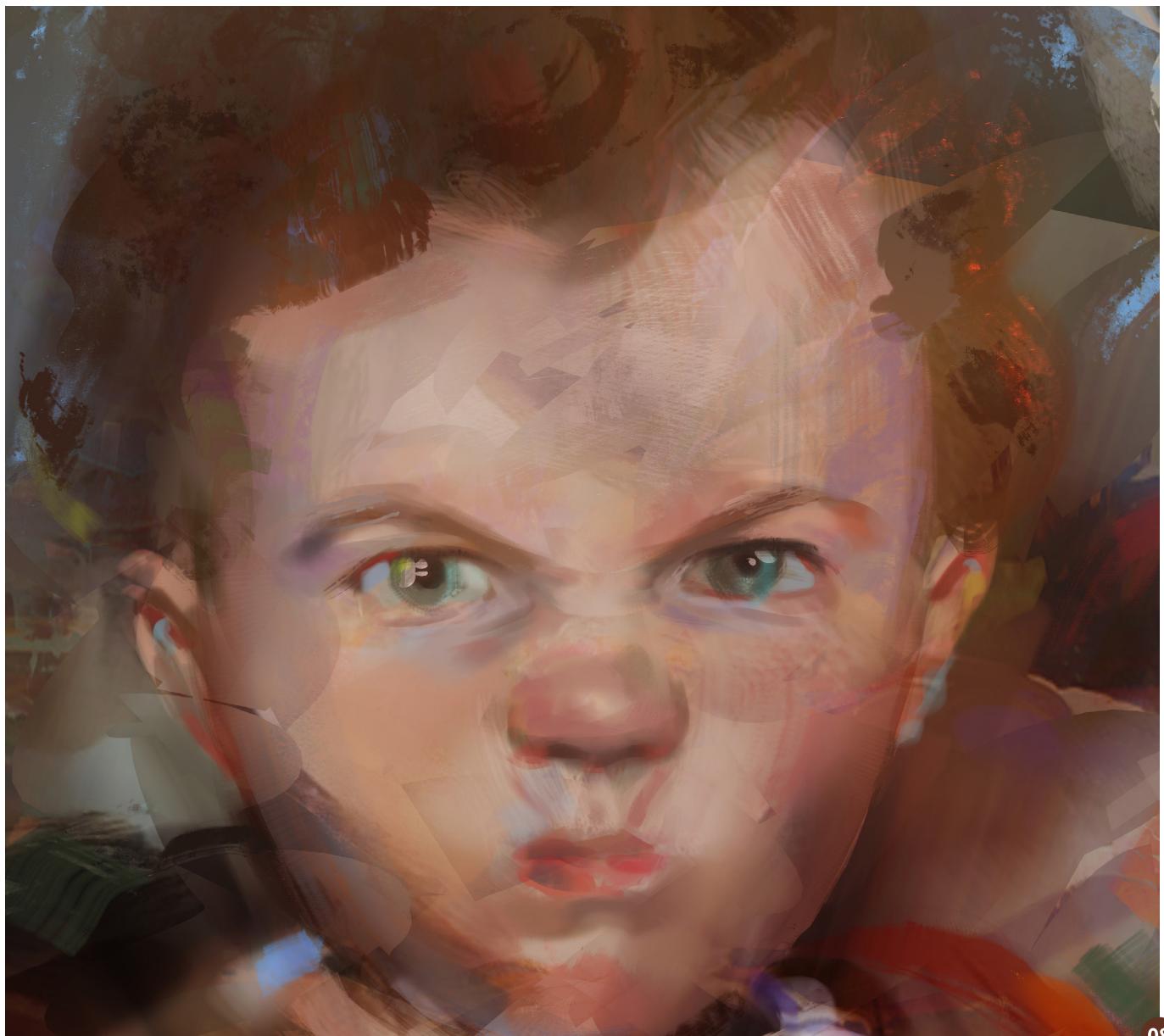
08

more than three at a time, and find it weird when I work with more. Most people think of these three layers as front, middle, and background, but actually, it's not that at all. My layers are managed in a different order: original, recent state and next state. Usually I work with replicated layers, which means I don't set different elements across different layers, and instead start my picture with one layer and duplicate the layer every x-amount of minutes and go ahead painting on this last. If I like my changes, then I'll merge the layers and replicate it again to carry on.

So why do I use this? In my opinion, it's because I don't focus on the layer structure, but rather the picture itself, as I don't separate the picture into concepts such as 'clouds' or 'cars'; instead, my picture exists as a whole so I can simply get on and paint.

08 **More texture, light and expression:** I increase the angry atmosphere by working on the nose, mouth and eyes. This also lets me add more texture in the face, but now I'm starting to see a problem with the forehead – for me it seems a little empty. To fix this, I have to reduce this effect taking the eye to another point and make that zone a little less prominent. The eyes, lips and nose will take an important role in managing this issue.

09 **Decide on a story:** I like to infer stories in my images. I think that every picture should show something about the author or the subject. In the end, it's a key part of the image; if your picture doesn't speak, then it won't be a great picture. For this reason I try to make up a reason for the character to be angry. I have a couple of ideas; the first idea shown here was rejected as it would take me back into details. In this unfinished idea, the kid is angry because


09

many women have kissed him, like a toy. I even thought of the title: The Female Experience – which infers a lively and angry, but funny, scene.

10 The final idea: My other idea is creating the impression of a ruffian guy: the 'big boy'. This idea was simple and realistic, and most importantly, everybody knows this feeling.

11 Increase light and color: To be honest, my favorite steps are the first and the last, when you can be more 'wild'. In the first step, you are free to create moods and in the last, you are free to play with colors.

I usually play with complementary and overlay effects in this step. My goal is to increase the power of the very small zones. When you play enough with this, the overall effect can be very luminous. I add some blues around the lips and nose, and red around the eyes. ●


08 Francisco needs to take the viewer's eye around the face in order to draw attention away from the forehead

09 Create stories with your picture – all pictures need a context

10 Choose the option that simplifies your work and keeps the picture expressive

11 The cyan plays well with the red lips, and the red contrast also works with the green eyes. This is basic art theory


The Artist

Francisco Albert
Web: tatitati.deviantart.com

Paint fantasy landscapes

YongSub Noh takes a comprehensive look at creating a fantasy world from a concept perspective, and investigates the processes and techniques that can be used to create all the major features of a game or film. In this tutorial, YongSub explores creating atmosphere and depth that you can follow to create your own rural settlement ▶

The Artist

YongSub Noh
Web: yong.cghub.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

YongSub Noh is a self-taught, 3D animation artist from South Korea. He currently works for NCsoft and enjoys playing PC games, playing the drums and working on concept art in his spare time.

Learn how to create perfect the lighting and color hues for a rural scene...

The final topic of our fantasy series is going to focus on crafting a rural settlement. For previous tutorials, please see issues 91 to 95 of 2dartist magazine.

This section, as before, is going take that same worldview of medieval fantasy that we have been working with, and use this as a base to create a composition of a village with fields. The topic will require more expression than the previous topics that we have covered in the series so far. So let's begin.

01 **The concept:** Before starting a drawing, I like to brainstorm the visual aspects. I want to express a scene that captures an element of the sky, land, buildings and vegetation.

I'm thinking of taking a realistic modern design and mixing it with a little bit of fantasy to represent the drawing. I think this will come out as a calm piece. The near distance and far distance, and the composition between the two, is going to be our biggest task.

As this image shows, always start off simply. With a simple sketch I form the location of the buildings and the main areas of sky and land. If you don't like the composition at this stage, start fixing the problem areas right away to your liking. Modifications won't be a problem, since this is a simple sketch stage. The important factor is that you must be satisfied with the sketch before moving on to the next step. If the artist themselves is unsure about their own work, then no one else will be able to relate to the image.
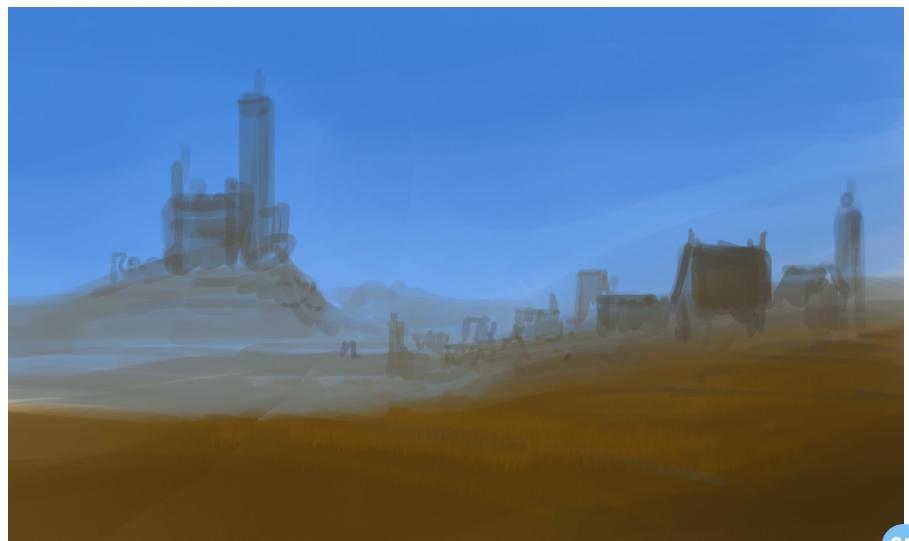
02 **Making changes:** While sketching, you might see some unfavorable parts in the composition. For example, I think that my image will look better if the composition of the scene is extended to the right, so I stretch out the canvas a little bit more in that direction.

When you draw it's important to have flexibility and to be wise. Don't ever feel like you have to go along with a wrong configuration or expression. When you feel unsure about something, you need to retouch and change the problem area immediately, even if the drawing might have taken a long time to execute.
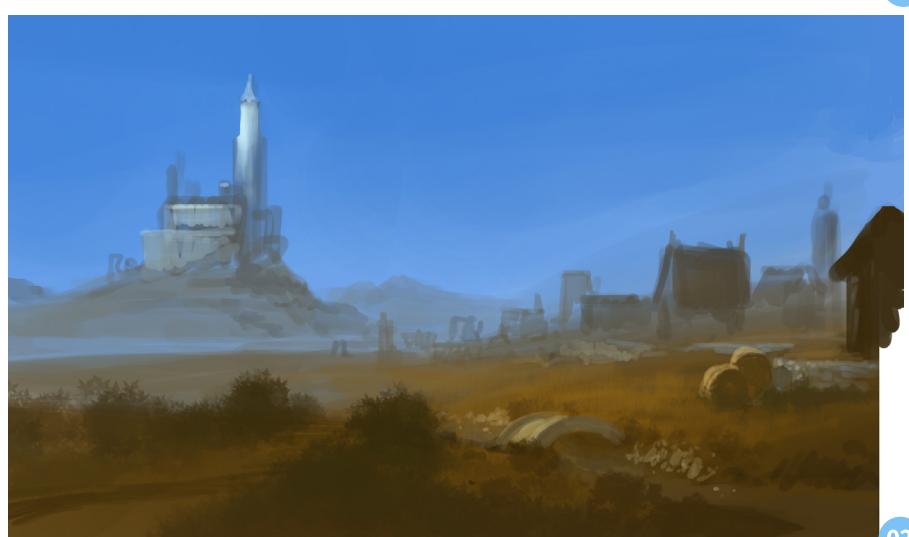
03 **Adding more elements:** Set the direction of the sunlight that touches the whole aspect of the scene in order to show a sense of volume. I also create a small forest in

the front and add a moving storage carriage to present a natural scene and a story within the picture. You can also set up the positioning of the clouds as well at this point. I think that's pretty good progress for an early stage sketch.

04 **Adding a tower:** I now add a tower and a greater three-dimensional element to the sky. This concrete dimension will possibly be used to add a fresh design to an otherwise ordinary scene. It will also bring out the feeling of fantasy as well.

> "When drawing, it's normal to add elements through improvisation. This is common in the work of a professional artist as well"

So far, I haven't exactly set in concrete the different elements for this drawing. I'm planning to decide on the setting as I go along. It's hard to plan everything perfectly in the early stages of an image. When drawing, it's normal to add elements through improvisation. This is common in the work of a professional artist as well.

05 **Adding vegetation:** I now present a little forest which will express the difference between the near distance showing the village, and the far distance showing the sky and the castle. Creating a feeling of distance naturally between a near and far distance is critically important, so elements such as the forest help by giving a clear distinction between the two.

In addition to this, the completeness of the whole picture gradually forms at the same time. It's good to give simple details and retouch the objects that already have a set form to give an even look to the whole picture.

06 **Improvisation:** I'm adding buildings towards the front, and mountains in the distance. I always improvise by adding elements to balance out the scene through the various steps in my work. For professional artists, steps like this will lessen. I'm not perfect yet!

07 **Housing:** The little stone bridge in the center of the village seems a little empty, so I add a house. I'm not using any layers so far. I'm drawing the entire process on one canvas.

08 **Re-adjusting the sky:** Because there is way too much sky, the overall look of the drawing doesn't set well. By using the Lasso tool in Photoshop, I copy the domain of the sky ▶

01 Getting down the basic shapes

02 Shifting the composition a little to enhance the image

03 Setting the direction of the sunlight to add volume

04 Add new objects as you like – you don't have to stick to a concrete plan

05 Using objects like vegetation is a great way to create a sense of depth

06 Feel free to add new elements to your scene if you think they are unbalanced

07

08

> "Mise-en-scène, as referred to in the movie genre, is any artificial direction to maximize the story and atmosphere of the scene, and the tree that I draw in the front acts as such"

and lower it down a little. At this point, I'm adding detail and also contrasting and retouching the colors for all the objects.

09 **Atmosphere:** The direction of the light's intensity is of course the basis of contrast. In these outdoor scenes, the intensity and tone of the daylight are the most important factors. They decide the atmosphere of the whole scene. I was thinking of noontime while drawing this piece, so depict the light as intense and the tone as a bright yellow color. Of course, the light isn't expressed perfectly just yet. I'm thinking about brightening up the scene as I go on with the process.

09

10 **Depth:** To create depth between the near and far distance, I add one more layer to my image and sketch a tree. A drawing is a form of embellishment. Mise-en-scène, as referred to in the movie genre, is any artificial direction to maximize the story and atmosphere of the scene, and the tree that I draw in the front

acts as such. That is why art is so intriguing. Also, it's because anything can be produced according to the artist's intention. It can simply be done by just drawing freehand.

10

11 **More adjustments:** The position of the sphere located near the tower doesn't look particularly good, so I remove it. The tree in the front also makes the whole drawing a little oppressive, so I take it out.

12 **Tone:** I then brighten up the whole tone by taking away the cloudy/dark feeling. This gives the brightness and darkness a stronger contrast, so bright parts get brighter and dark parts get darker. However, the contrast gets ▶

**07** You can use layers, though Yong prefers not to at this stage

08 It's important that you're happy with the composition

09 Deciding on a noontime light-scheme set the atmosphere of the image

10 Adding more depth by utilizing the forefront of the image

11 Feel free to experiment with any element in your image

12 Adjusting the tone to brighten the image
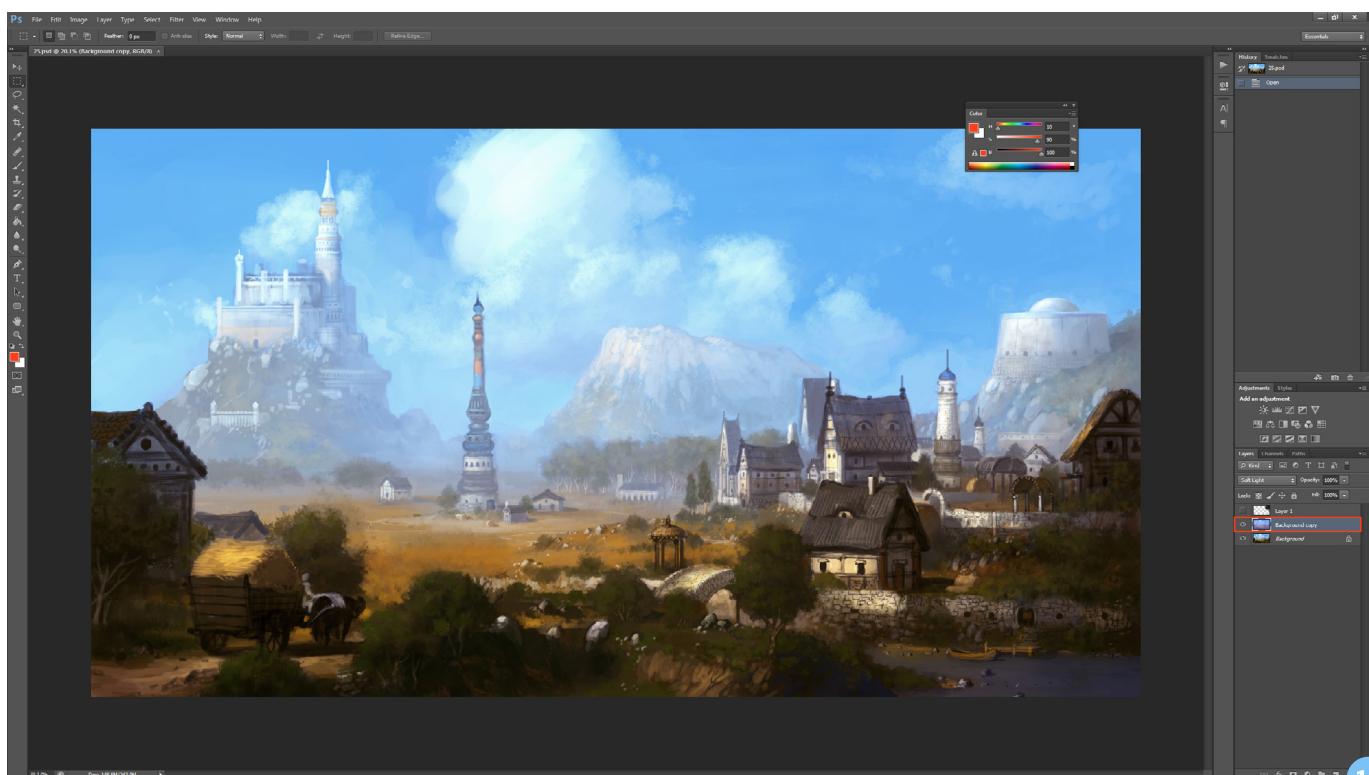
darker when used, so the copied layer's Lightness level needs to be set lighter. Lightness level can be controlled in the Image > Adjustment > Hue/Saturation located in the upper menu bar of Photoshop. The shortcut key is Ctrl+U.

13 **Tone II:** There is another way to adjust the tone too. You can control the Opacity level of the Soft Light layer or you can control the canvas layer by using Levels. The effects

are similar with both methods. Usually, many artists will likely use the Levels method; however, using the Image > Adjustment > Hue/Saturation method is more comfortable for me and I use it more often. Also, the perk of this method is that when leveling the Soft Light layer, you can change the tone of the whole scene.

This will all be easier for you to understand when you do it hands-on.

I change the tone of this Soft Light layer to a slight purple, so that the whole scene's tone now shows off a bluish color. Those of you who have a keen sense probably noticed and understood why I didn't use more layers and present the whole drawing in a single layer.

14 **Revising the image:** This image shows how I redraw the sphere. I choose to depict a concept like a circular glass marble

floating in the sky. I didn't really think about the probability of the story. This world is fantasy, a world of imagination where anything is possible. The sphere that I draw acts as an object that represents fantasy. When seen in the picture, it acts as an eye-catcher.

15 **Retouching the details:** This image shows how I retouch the details to make them clearer, and add red flowers to give an abundant feeling to it. The clouds are also retouched as well.

16 **Overlays:** To make the tone of the light more abundant, I add one more layer and change the setting to Overlay, then use a soft brush to add a red color tone over the near distance area and also the castle. You have to keep in mind to brush it over very lightly so the colors don't become overpowering.

If you feel that the colors are overpowering, then lower the level of Opacity on the Overlay layer. Of course, you don't have to use the settings and can just draw it by hand; however, settings like Overlay, Soft Light or Hard Light give a great finish and it's an easy way to express light. Use it properly to your liking.

The parts that have been colored previously with Overlay are now slightly weakened by the lowered level of Opacity, and the terrain has been set brighter by using the Dodge tool. I made an adjustment to the overall drawing by slightly lowering the driveway to give a calm feeling. I also removed the tree in the foreground, which was

added in the center, because it kept giving off an oppressive feeling.

17 **The final image:** Thus, the entire process is completed. This is the completed image.

I hope this, and my previous turorials in the series, has helped! Honestly, I didn't receive a professional education for concept art or illustration. In my case, I learned my skills hands-on and developed them by working on projects for games and animations for over ten years.

Nowadays, a lot of tutorials and professional teachings are available, so the learning conditions have definitely improved from before. I hope you all create great pieces and become great concept artists. I believe the answer to becoming a great artist is effort. Talent isn't something you are born with, but what you create. Without a doubt, a

person who puts their heart and interest into this field, and really makes an effort, can become a great artist. ●

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13 Some of the methods and settings when changing the tone of the image

14 Adding a sphere suggests an element of fantasy

15 Adding more detail and tweaking areas of the image

16 Using Overlays to enhance the general atmosphere of your image

2dartist.

34 pages of tutorials inside!

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YongSub Noh explores atmosphere and depth

Tips for portraying emotions
Francisco Albert demonstrates how to successfully capture anger

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Donglu Yu reveals how to capture mood

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Kick-start the creation process and learn to paint with ease

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The Artist


Richard Tilbury
Web: richardtilburyart.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Digital painting: how to generate ideas

As part of a series that takes a look at the process behind producing a digital painting, Richard Tilbury provides detailed, step-by-step tutorials that cover the principal techniques employed in Photoshop to create your own sci-fi themed image. In this issue Rich discusses ways to generate ideas through sketching, thumbnails and using reference images ▶

Discover how to generate ideas through sketching and thumbnails...

During this tutorial we shall take a look at the process behind producing a digital painting and some of the principal techniques employed. This particular commission orientated around a science-fiction theme entitled 'Search and Rescue', and depicts a crash site being investigated by a search party of astronauts looking for survivors or perhaps some valuable cargo.

We will consider the entire process behind digital painting, beginning with ways to generate an idea through sketching and thumbnails as well as the use of reference photos. From here, we shall continue through the blocking-in phase and discuss the notion of perspective and composition and the integral role of color and lighting.

Custom brushes will also feature, as well as the inclusion of photography as a way of adding textural realism and as a foundation for enhancing detail.

01 **Gathering references and initial sketches:** The first stage in any painting is to consider the subject matter or storyline, something that precedes any drawing or sketching. If you already have a brief outline or title then you have a little information to begin with. From here there are two alternative routes you could take, both of which are equally valid. The first is to gather reference material in the form of images relating to the topic – and the internet is as good a starting point as any. The second option involves creating some small compositional studies to try and determine the key components such as shape, light and space. It doesn't really matter which route you follow first as both are equally valid, but you may find it easier to look for references if you are struggling to visualize anything.

With the subject established you can begin to search for relevant materials. In this case, these were entirely based on astronauts and spacesuits from various films. It was important to do some research on this subject in order to ensure that the characters looked plausible, but other than this I relied on my imagination for the design of the environment. If the title of this piece had related to a real-world scenario and factual

> "The best approach is to work on a small scale with the canvas zoomed out to around 35%, using large bold brushstrokes, varying the brushes if need be"

subject matter, then I would naturally have researched these topics, but it was enough to begin with just the characters.

As we shall see later on, I introduced some photo references to help form some of the details in the image, but for the time being it was the characters that took priority.

Having compiled a small library of images, I began sketching some small studies exploring various compositions and spaceship designs. During this stage, I often have little or no idea about how the image will look and so repeatedly scribble random shapes until something tangible evolves. The best approach is to work on a small scale with the canvas zoomed out to around 35%, using large bold brushstrokes, varying the brushes if need be. It is good to focus on the general shapes and tonal range as opposed to any details at this point.

01
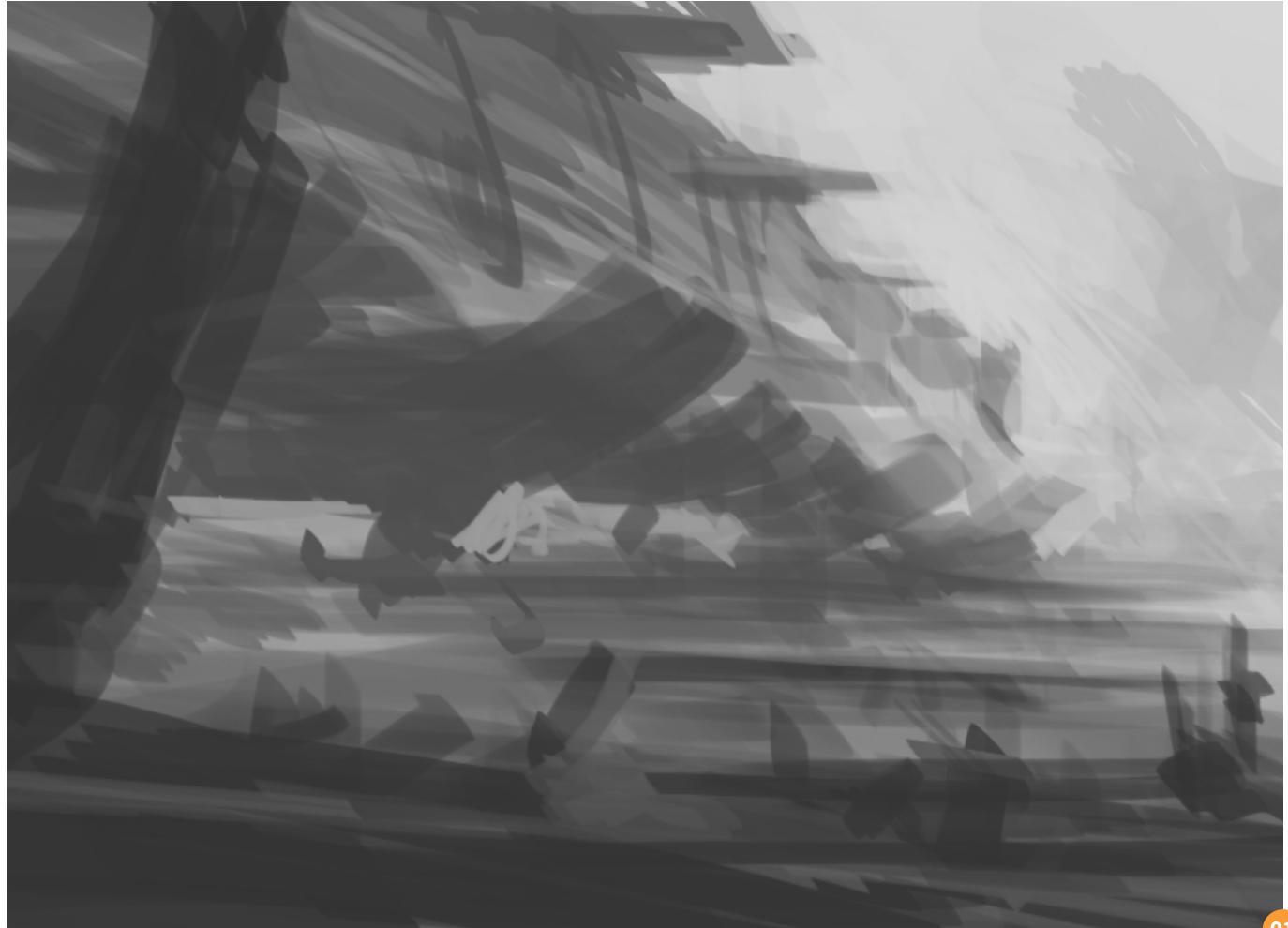
Here is an example of a quick thumbnail sketch done using a single Hard Elliptical brush. To avoid a 'feathery' look I used a hard-edged brush as this created clearer spatial relationships between the various elements. At this point you want to be able to picture the overall scene and define the foreground, middle distance and background.

02 **Creating a sense of depth:** In this case we have a structure in the foreground which is in shadow with a spaceship in the middle distance disappearing towards the horizon. The background hints at another part of the wreck which is little more than a silhouette. When creating a scene with a lot of depth, remember to adhere to the laws of atmospheric perspective which, simply put, results in more contrast and darker tones in the foreground.

The two photographs illustrate this theory whereby the distant scenery adopts more of the ambient light and color of the sky. The darker tones are nearest the viewer where we witness the strongest shadows and most of the detail. You can see in both examples how the scenery becomes closer to the color of the sky as it recedes.

Despite being very simple, the initial sketches crucially display a sense of depth and scale and establishes our foreground, middle distance and background. Before going into any significant detail, it is also worth determining the perspective by way of the horizon line and vanishing point/ points depending on whether you employ one, two or three-point perspective.

03 **Vanishing points:** There is plenty of information online and in books about this, but if we look at this image you can see ▶
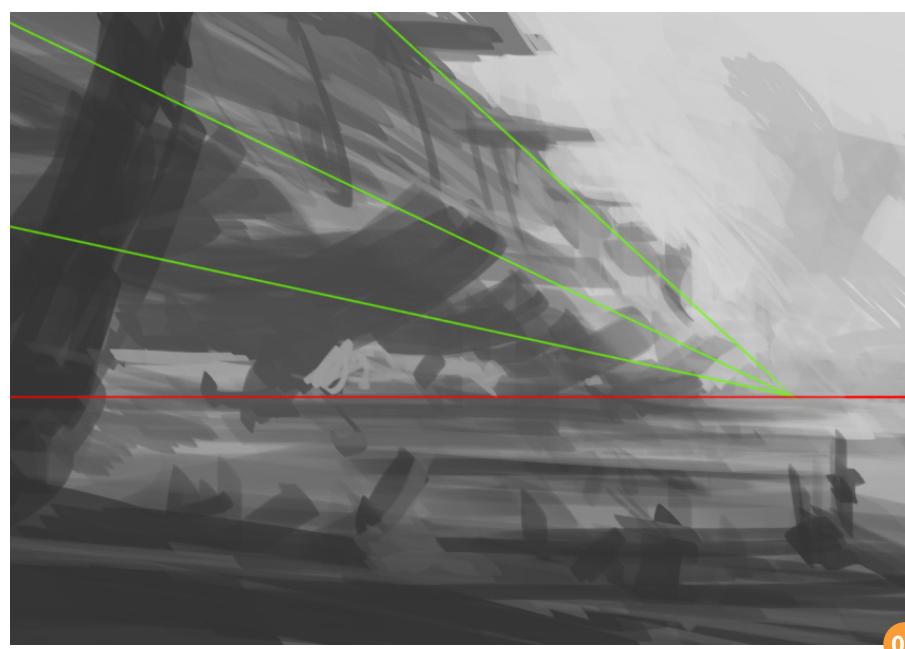
01 A quick thumbnail sketch using a Hard Elliptical brush, keeping clear spatial relationships between each stage

02 Demonstrating how to convey a sense of depth

**03** This illustrates the vanishing points and the horizon line in the image

"Where the viewer is positioned in relation to the horizon will determine how we view the scene"

that I have placed a red horizon line and three green lines that roughly trace back towards the vanishing point.

04 **Using a two-point perspective:** If we were to use a two-point perspective it would involve using two vanishing points as opposed to one. Where the viewer is positioned in relation to the horizon will determine how we view the scene. Although perspective exists everywhere it is only really apparent in architectural environments or ones that incorporate man-made objects.

In this image, for example, the lower cube could represent a building seen from an aerial perspective, while the upper one could be part of a tall structure seen from ground level. You could also introduce a third vanishing point above or below the horizon line which is apparent with low and high angle viewpoints.

05 **Creating the third vanishing point:** Create a series of lines tracing to a third vanishing point below the horizon line showing the perspective of the verticals.

VP — Horizon Line — VP
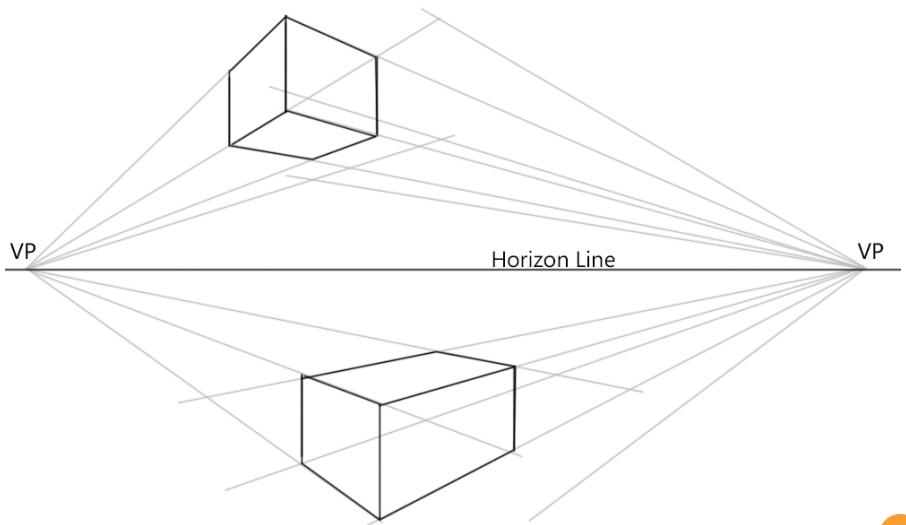
The importance of setting up a perspective grid depends on the nature of your scene and the content. If you are describing a complicated architectural environment then it will prove useful but if it is a natural environment then it is less so.

Using the initial sketches as a starting point, I made a few more thumbnails based upon a large scale crash. I liked the idea of a huge ship dwarfing the characters so pursued this theme.

06 **Composition:** Here are three variations of my image, using both the landscape and the portrait formats. Each one focuses on scenes with a sense of depth and the use of atmospheric perspective.

The astronauts in the left and upper-right image create a gauge through which to measure the scale but all three are structured in a similar way to the image in step one, with the darkest values set in the foreground. Each has a little more detail than step one but the focus still remains on the key shapes, composition and spatial depth.

06

07

04 Frames for different perspectives, depending on the position of the viewer

05 Setting up grid lines to create another dimension to the picture

06 Creating different variations of the sketch to determine the right composition

07 Taking elements of each of the experimental variations and creating the best composition
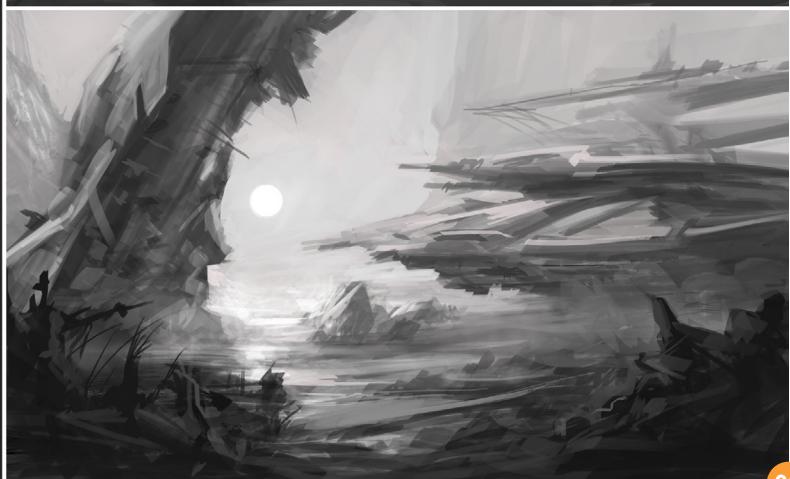
07 **Finalizing the composition:** The other important factor to try and establish at this stage is the light source and lighting conditions. In the upper right sketch in step six, you can see that the sun is somewhere to the right, whereas the left-hand image describes more overcast conditions with a softer, more ambient light.

I decided to create another thumbnail with the characters nearer the ship to help emphasize its size. I liked the cylindrical plate-like structure in the two right images and so used this as a basis for the design. This bears a resemblance to step one, albeit with a little more detail, but again adheres to the principals of atmospheric perspective to create depth and scale. ▶

Use various blending modes

08

"If you have trouble visualizing something from a random doodle, then try using the common technique of starting with a photograph"

08 **Other methods to inspire an image:** All of the images so far have been painted from scratch, but if you have trouble visualizing something from a random doodle, then try using the common technique of starting with a photograph.

Here is a grouping of three photos that have first been desaturated and then combined and re-orientated using a variety of blending modes to produce the version on the right. You may notice the block of flats from the middle photo and some of the skyscraper lights in the lower image.

09 **The final composition:** This step shows the consequent composition that evolved from this approach, with the block of flats assuming the hull of the spaceship on the left. The rectangular shape in the upper-left of the image in step eight, has become a structure that now lunges from the right. ●

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08 Not inspired by random doodles? Try using a series of photographs to begin your image

09 Finishing touches to the composition

The Artist

Richard Tilbury
Web: richardtilburyart.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

The Artist

Donglu Yu
Web: donglu-littlefish.blogspot.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Donglu Yu is a senior concept artist working at Ubisoft Montreal in Canada. She has worked on game titles such as *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*, *Assassin's Creed III*, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.

Create cinematic mood paintings

With the demand for digital painting increasing due to the growing popularity of conceptual art in the film, game and video industries, it's becoming ever more important to understand the techniques used to capture mood and atmosphere in a scene. In this tutorial, Donglu Yu embraces the research and techniques used to capture the regal feeling of a throne room ▶
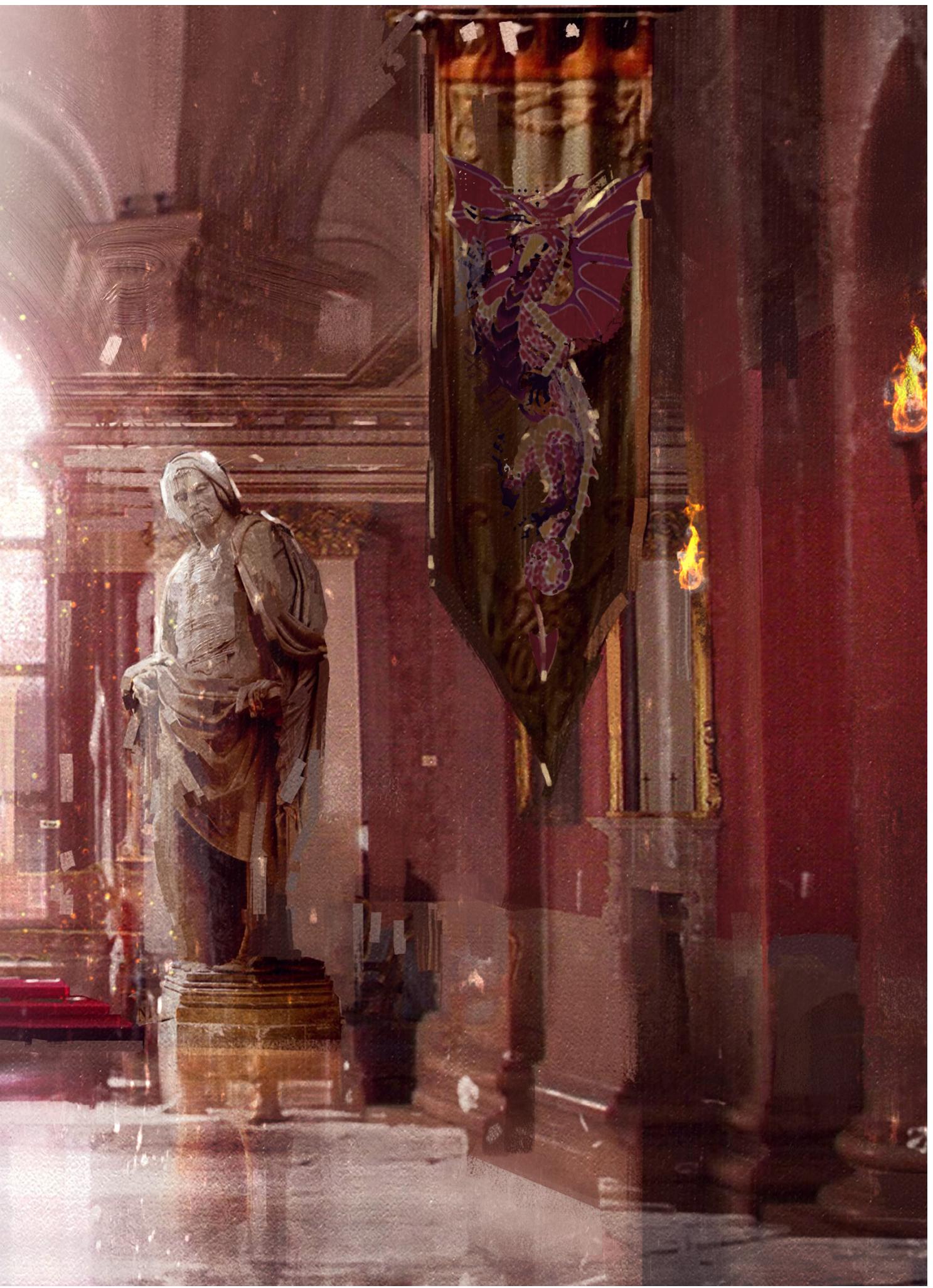
Convey a regal atmosphere through the use of unique visual language...

This tutorial takes you through the researching, sketching, coloring, detailing and polishing phases of the creation of a throne room for a cinematic mood painting. It demonstrates how unique visual language, such as silhouettes and lighting choices, can accentuate the regal feel that I will try to convey through the illustration.

Cinematic mood painting is not only for the cinema industry, it has become very common for the videogame cinematic productions too. Most art departments are usually looking for the mood and the emotions in such paintings, which are very different from production design concept artworks. Those concept art pieces usually require more detail for assisting modelers and texture artists in the production phase later on.

So for today's cinematic painting, I will first emphasize the warming-up step by looking at key words that can give you inspiration prior to sketching the first ideas out. Then I will slowly develop a chosen sketch into a final art piece by giving it an appealing color palette and texture details. Along the process, I will also briefly talk about the proper use of customized brushes.

For those who are less familiar with Photoshop, I will also introduce a few handy tools within the software to speed up the creation process. Whenever I have the chance, I will insert my professional experience in the concept art field to give you an idea of how this process has evolved in a production context, explaining how artists get briefs and interact with the art directors, as the nature and the content of the interactions can greatly impact the final quality of the illustrations.

01 **Selecting key words:** The main subject is a throne room, promoting a regal feeling which should emphasize the mood of the painting. There is a lot to think about before putting any strokes on the canvas, so I collect my thoughts and let the storm extend as far as it can go.

So here is the fun part, I put down all the key words which come across my mind when I think about the subject of a throne room. As you can see in the image, there are elements such as wide chamber, shallow step, the throne and a wide window for lighting.
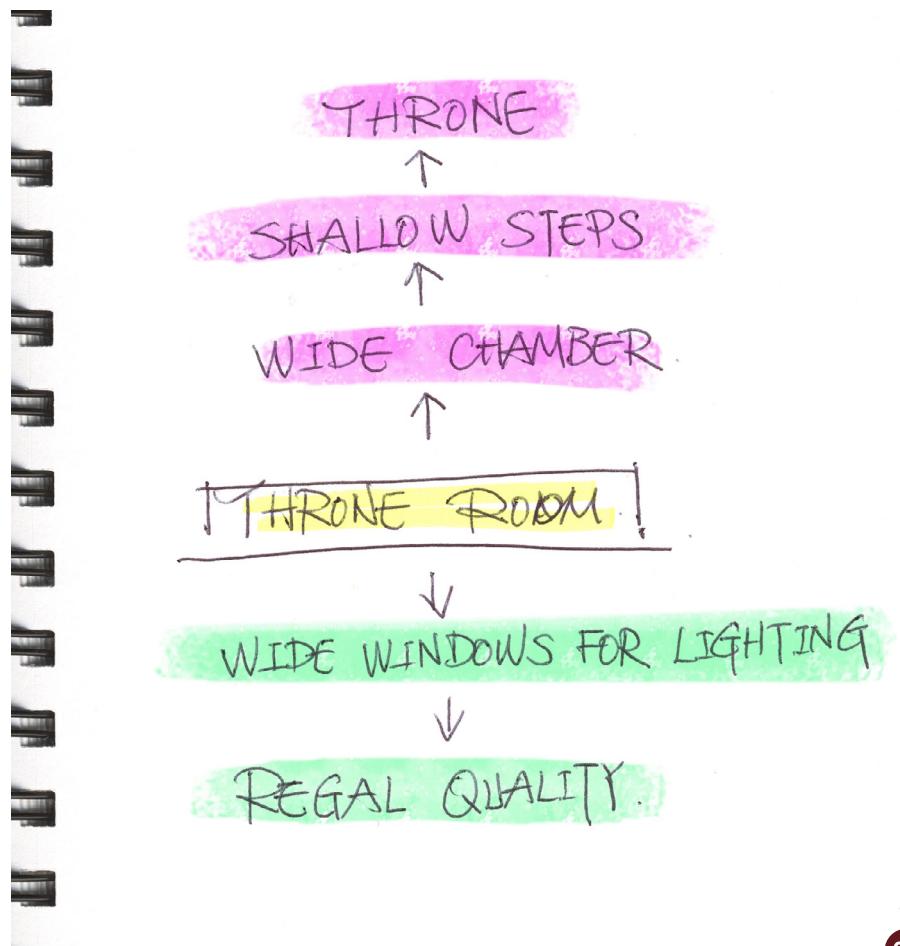
These few words push me to ask myself many questions about the way that I can approach the scene: Should the main light source hit from the side as a sunset or a skylight from the ceiling? How can I dress up the rather empty room with materials? How can I give the king an ethereal quality? As I am trying to answer these questions, there are already a few solid visual solutions appearing in my mind.

02 **First thoughts down:** For the first sketch, I have chosen a traditional centered angle for this wide chamber. This

composition is very imposing; we often see it applied to cathedrals, palace entrances, religious ceremonies, etc. I have put windows on the sides and another large one behind the throne because I am not sure yet how to handle the light sources and I want to keep my options open for now.

For the sketch itself, I use a Charcoal brush in my Photoshop brush set. This can give a slight texture to the brushstrokes without it being too overwhelming, so the structural volumes can still stay clear for the later rendering.

I have found some really good references on **www.freetextures.3dtotal.com/index.php**, which contain a large variety of royalty-free images, so don't hesitate to use this resource for finding useful high resolution references. It is also very useful to build your own visual bank by taking tons of pictures during your trips and daily life routines.

03 Trying out a different composition: I

wanted to take some risks and to try out a non-conventional composition with a camera angle from the right side. The sketch phase is really a great time to open up possibilities and come up with fresh ideas.

We have a less imposing feeling here, but there is some really strong foreground elements such as columns to make clear separation for the depth. I still want to keep the lighting above the throne, but in this case, it would be hard to hide the light source from the windows on the left side. I am afraid that two strong light sources would fight with each other.

For me, the readability of the image is one of the main concerns when making an appealing mood painting. I use the same brush as the first sketch and refer to the picture references on the 3dtotal free textures website to help me out with the column structures, since they are less straightforward to paint than the first sketch.

04 Picking the final composition:

After taking a short break to refresh my eye, I decide to go with the first sketch. This is because the main skylight source
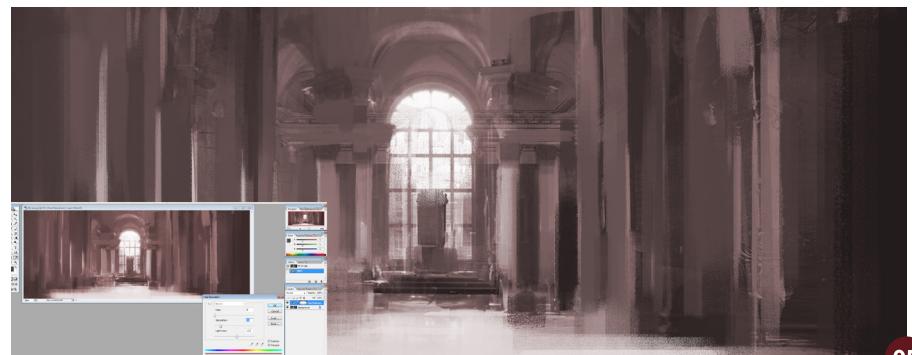
complements the imposing and regal feeling that I am trying to attain with the painting. This centered composition is also more accepted by the audience as an opening sequence of an introduction to the king. However, I find the first sketch needs a little more room to breathe, so I enlarge the canvas to open up the chamber.

As you can see, the brushstrokes are very rough as they are simply aimed at indicating the general volumes – to block things out. I restrain myself from getting too precise with the lines yet, because it will make it more difficult when putting down colors later. I would be afraid to destroy any precise lines that I have spent hours drawing, which will definitely limit my progress and the fun experience of making a concept.

05 Early steps of colorization: I take the

black and white sketch and put a Hue/ Saturation adjustment on top of it. I then tick the ▶

03

04

05

01 This brainstorming map is an efficient tool to trigger fresh ideas and link them in one single image

02 Large brushstrokes are applied to shape out a wider chamber with various potential light sources

03 Nice second visual option, but the lighting sources would be much harder to manage than the first one

04 Block things out roughly to define the space distribution, but without being too precise

05 Use adjustment layers to get the main color tone without worrying too much about color nuances
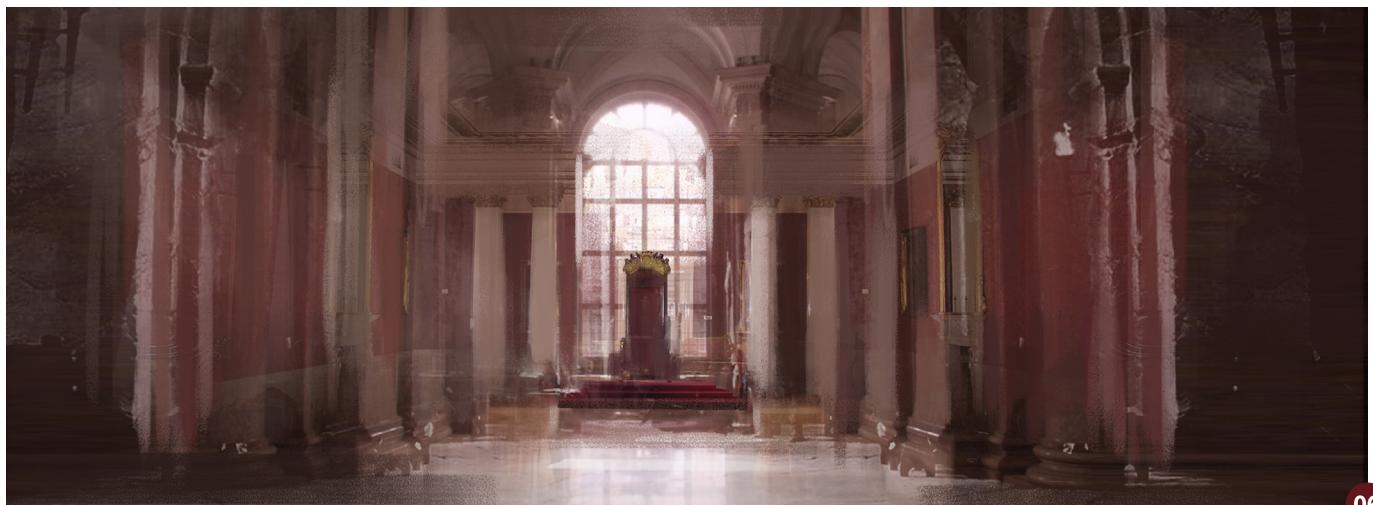
> ## "A good way to work on an image is by using less contrasted and desaturated tones until the last few steps"

Colorize box and give it a hue according to my personal preference or the production need.

I then desaturate the color so I can add more saturated colors later on. I choose a desaturated red in this case, because I want to give the scene a warm tone. A good way to work on an image is by using less contrasted and desaturated tones until the last few steps, as it gives good control over the image – otherwise the color palette would soon become hard to manage.

It is important to discuss the color palette with the art director, as it will depend on the personality of the king that he wants to portray in the scene. I would definitely go with a darker and colder tone if the king is an evil character in the storytelling, for example.

06 Shaping things out with materials:
I continue to lay down color nuances on a monochromatic image. The goal is to bring more value variations to make a good contrast between fewer materials and textures. Such contrast can further define the volumes, enabling the viewer to better understand how the room is constructed and structured.

I also use a more saturated red color on the carpet of the shallow steps and also on the king's chair. This accentuates the royal family aspect of the scene. I usually stick with the essential brushes for now: a small crisp brush to paint highlight and sharp lines, two texture brushes to give some tonal nuances, a fog brush to emphasis ambiance and a Charcoal brush to do all the basic painting works.

As for the fancy and heavily-textured brushes, I only use them at the very end to give the illusion of detail. Also, when you are in a real production situation, it can happen that the art director realizes at this point that this is actually not the direction that he wants to go with, so it is better to keep the painting simple and straightforward, just in case any major changes are needed – this way I wouldn't have wasted too much time.

⚡ PRO TIP
Research and study
It is important to make time for the first part of the painting process, which is conducting research and sketching out the ideas. I think that the techniques can be mastered with time and practice, however studying different subject matters is an endless lesson for artists.

For reaching an artistic maturity, it is absolutely necessary to widen our knowledge base, especially if you want to become a professional digital artist in the entertainment industries. No one can predict what kind of projects that he/she will be involved in one day; it could be historical, sci-fi, fantasy, cartoon, etc. Each of them implies tons of study subjects.

07 **Adding the statues:** The chamber is pretty empty at this point. I don't want to add any furniture to crowd up the space, but two statues on both sides of the throne might be a good solution to make a scale contrast and make this scene more identifiable.

I find some good pictures on the 3dtotal free reference website (**www.freetextures.3dtotal. com**) for the statues. Since the scene is already fairly symmetrical, I use two different statues to break this symmetry.

I take a little time to change the contrast and the color temperature of the original photos to match the airy feeling that we have in the throne room. The statues are lit by both the big window behind the chair and the skylight from above, so I would definitely avoid any sharp dark shadow areas.

One little thing about the photo extraction: usually I don't use the eraser or magic wonder, I use the Lasso tool to obtain clean outlines of the objects that I want to extract.

08 **Continuing to carve things out:** I do a lot of work in this step as I need to do a major detailing job on the overall image. I continue using the Charcoal brush, but reduce its size considerably so I only paint with small brushstrokes. It is important to spend some time drawing small details on the outlines of those big shapes in order to make them visually appealing and realistic.

Two big elements that I add: the king and the flags. The king is the only character in the scene, and also pushed far back in the distance, but his importance remains the same. Without his presence, there is no life and authority in this throne room. He is roughly middle-aged, fierce and proud, and has only recently been crowned. The flag adds a more cultural context to this country and its people. They are always good to add as foreground elements. I continue to bring the red textures out on the walls by saturating them even more.

I really enjoy this stage as I can completely immerse myself in the painting itself without worrying too much about the composition and color tone, because they have already been taken care of in the earlier stages.

09 **Detailing the props:** At this stage, I use even smaller brushstrokes on the painting. I add some effects needed in the scene, such as the torch lights. I keep those elements on a separate layer or folder, just in case the art director wants to tweak the intensity of the flame.

This is the stage to judge the overall detail distribution. An even spread of detail level can distract the view from the focus point of the image. So I slightly erase the textures on the foreground columns and add more strokes near the middle ground columns and the king.

By looking at the image, I also feel the need to accentuate the reflection on the marble floor and darken the value of the foreground columns. I often look at the small navigator window at the top left of my Photoshop, so I am always in control of the overall feel of the scene. The common mistake at this stage is often an overdose of details that kills the nice ambience that we have achieved so far.

10 **Lighting and color adjustment:** If a well-worked silhouette is one thing that gives your painting a more finished quality, then adding some crisp highlights to selected elements is another trick to reach a higher level of rendering. Those highlights make the elements stand out and catch the viewer's attention. I usually use a crisp, hard-edged round brush to achieve this effect.

The very last step consists of bringing the ceiling skylight flowing down to the sitting king. I use a large round airbrush to paint the light and switch the layer mode to screen to achieve this purpose. Then I use a Scattered Dust brush to emphasize the airy quality of the throne room.

In videogame production, the art director may occasionally make an urgent request to have a concept art developed, and it would be nearly impossible to complete such a task without using the proper digital tools. I hope the techniques and process covered in this tutorial greatly increase your painting speed and learning curve! ●

06 Further defining the volumes by applying different materials and textures to the image

07 Adding some giant statues can further enhance the scale and show the space within the room

08 It is more manageable to start from a big mass and then work down to the smaller details

09 Start to detail the props by giving even more precise volumes and materials

10 The lighting source is reinforced and color balance is applied to bring everything together

The Artist

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spot.com

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The Artist

Albert Ramon Puig
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Software Used:
Photoshop, Illustrator

Albert Ramon Puig works as
a professional artist in the
game industry, designing the
UI and creating concept art.
He spends most of his free
time drawing concept art and
3D modeling.
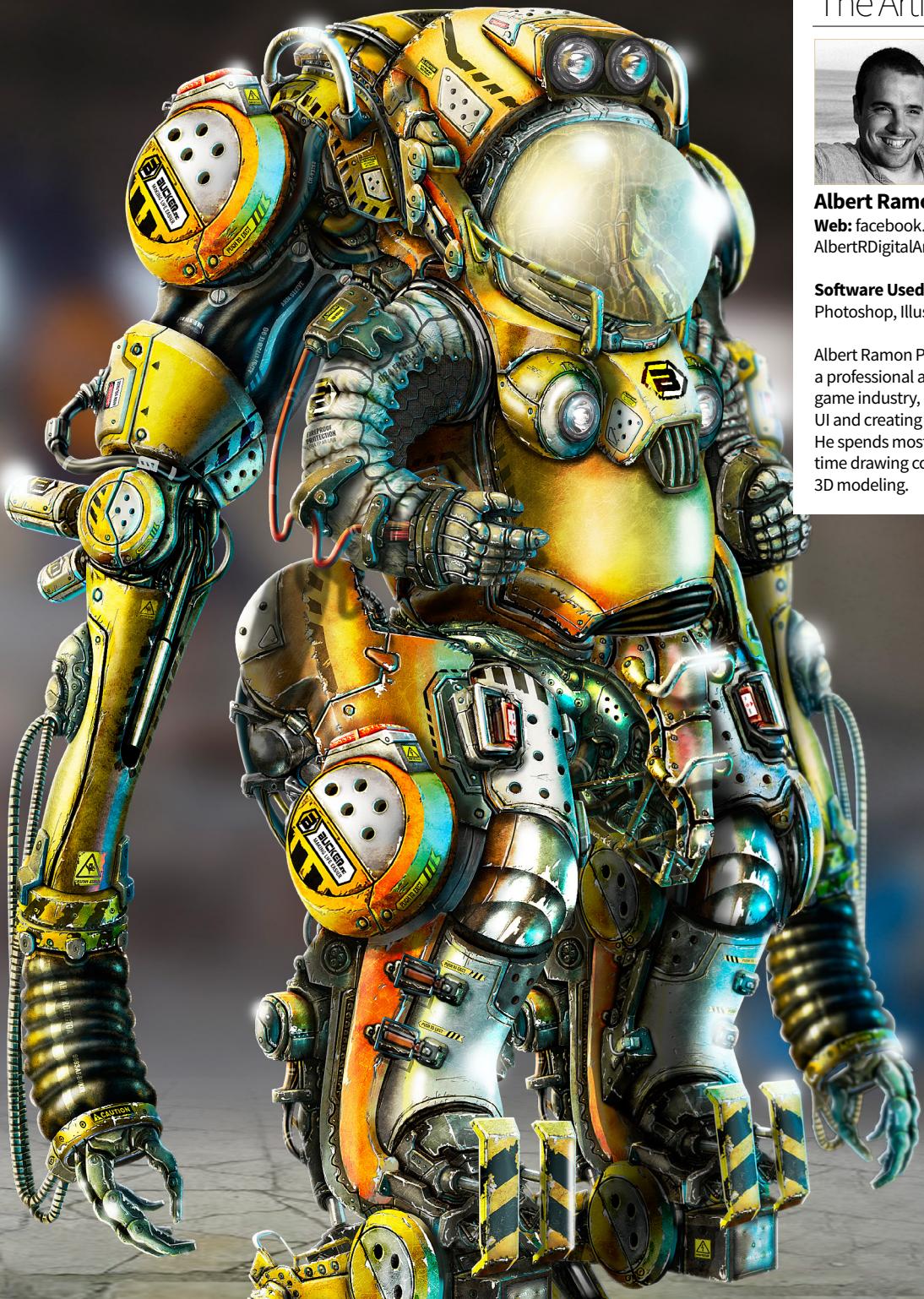
Texture industrial pieces

User interface (UI) designer and concept artist Albert Ramon Puig focuses on
the process of painting metal pieces in this ten step project overview of his
futuristically-inspired image, *BPE-2405-SP Powered Exoskeleton* ▶

Read on to discover Albert Ramon Puig's painting process for industrial machines…

The background of the image is an exoskeleton of the fictitious company, Buker Inc. – a multinational manufacturer for the heavy machinery and military industries, and is one of the leading manufacturers of the super-corporation, CELLSIUS Corp.

The exoskeleton has been designed for loading and unloading, repairing and manipulating elements in areas of extreme temperatures. It is a model designed to be effective, not aesthetic. The thermal protection for human arms, the reinforced glass for diving, the protection of the chassis and the great capacity to adapt to new handling or protection accessories, make this exoskeleton perfect for the job.

The design is inspired by the futuristic style used in the 80s and 90s, and especially by one of the movies of my childhood: *Alien*. The feeling I want to convey is its robust, analog and functional appearance, giving special emphasis to some details such as warning signs and scratches.

It is a work of great detail. Each tube, screw and piece is individually made. I made it as if I was building a real machine, posing problems and seeking their solutions, designing parts and mechanisms with the desired function.

The tutorial focuses on the process of painting metal pieces in ten steps, using the following techniques: painting through masks, texture application for realism, light and decals application, and layer effects to make grooves and scratches for transmitting credibility to the design.

01 **FX/Texture library structure:** Once I had the outline of the robot and the light research done, I created a folder with all the textures and layers with the layer effect. This way, I could always use it for each piece, making the whole design visually uniform.

02 **FX/Texture library description:** In this image, you can observe the configurations of the three layer effects that I used: grooves, scratches and paint, followed by the three textures; metal, detail and dirty. These configurations vary according to the type of piece or illustration's design. ▶

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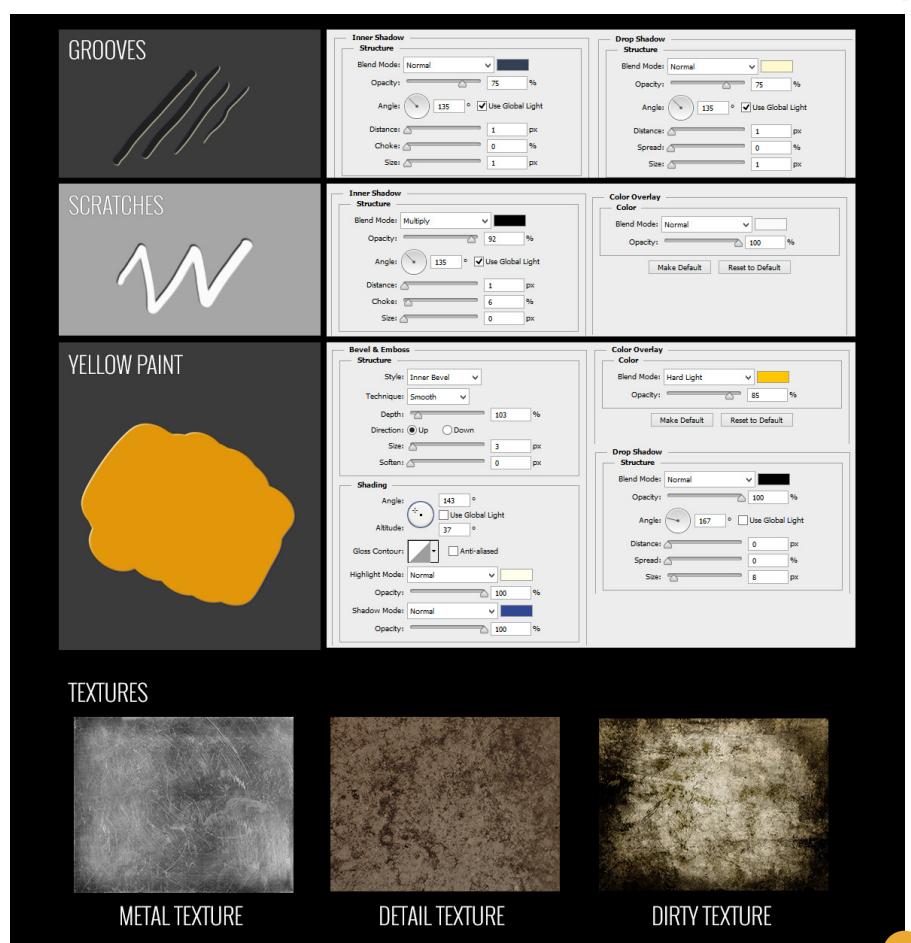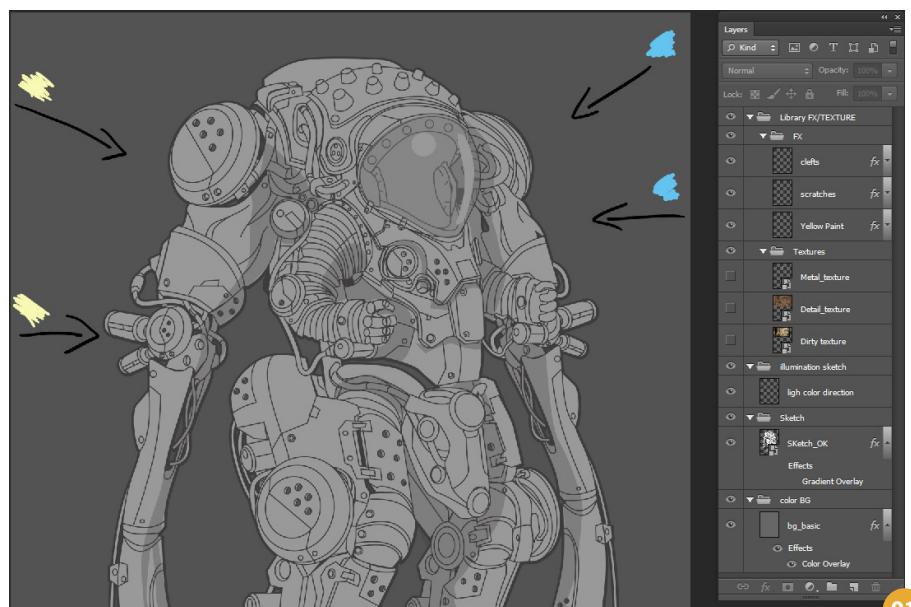
⚡ **PRO TIP**

Be tidy

It is important to be very tidy when naming your folders and the backups when you use a lot of layers, effects, and masks. This will save time when looking for the right asset.

01 The robot's outline and the structure of the library

02 The effects and texture detail used in the image

"My fundamental starting point on any image is to begin with a dark color silhouette"

03 **Black silhouette and mask:** My fundamental starting point on any image is to begin with a dark color silhouette (not a pure black one). I then select it and create a folder with the mask of the silhouette in question. Working this way allows me to paint the inside part without the risk of losing the shape of the original piece. I then gave the folder an appropriate name.

04 **Color and light:** After I had completed the previous steps, I began painting the piece. I had to create a new layer and apply the painting's effect. I first painted the piece, leaving the parts that did not have an uncovered painting. Then I painted the lights and shadows with another layer.

05 **Grooves, shines and decals:** I then created a layer and applied the Layer Groove effect, and traced all the pieces' grooves in question. After that, I created a layer and painted some shiny highlights with the light's color, adding intensity so they seemed deep.

06 **Scratches:** I then created another layer and called it Scratches. I applied the layer effect from the library and painted all the graze-piece's zones – not only the surroundings of the grooves, but also the most prominent areas of the figure. This provided a 'waste' effect and gave more realism at the same time.

⚡ PRO TIP
...

Realistic decals
It is essential to plan and design the metal pieces with their functionality in mind. You can apply scratches, friction areas or logical decals later, by observing parts where the pieces would realistically graze or be hit with external elements. This way the picture will transmit a sense of realism and functionality.

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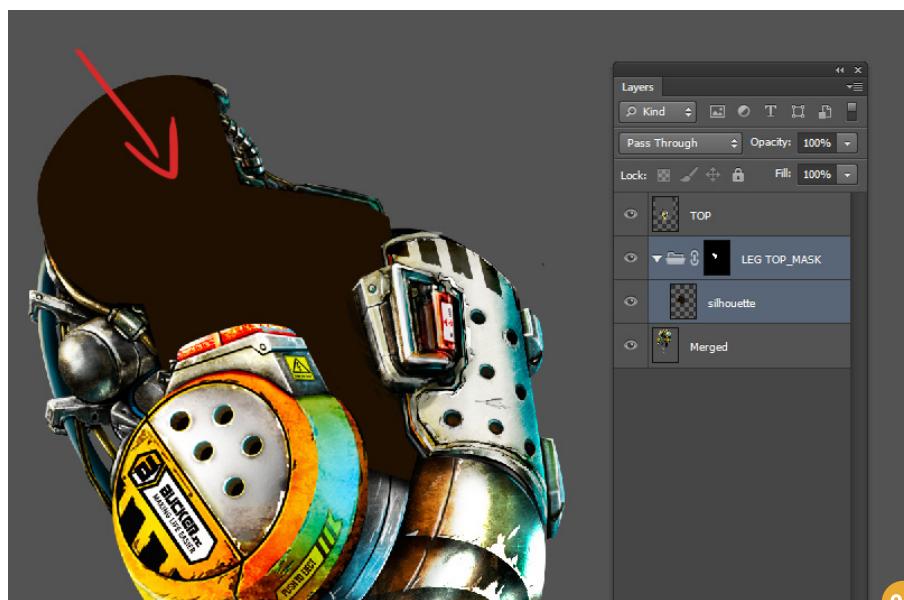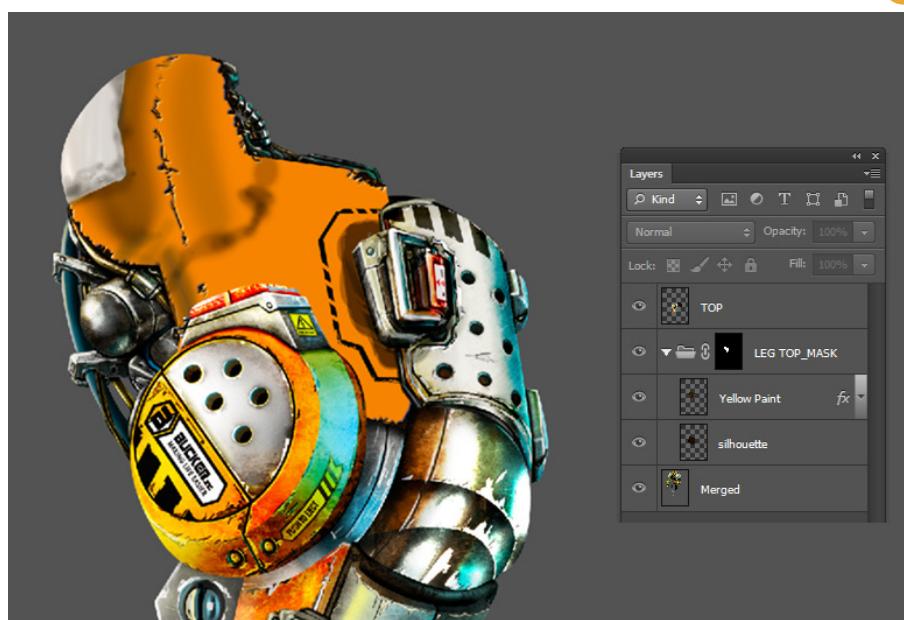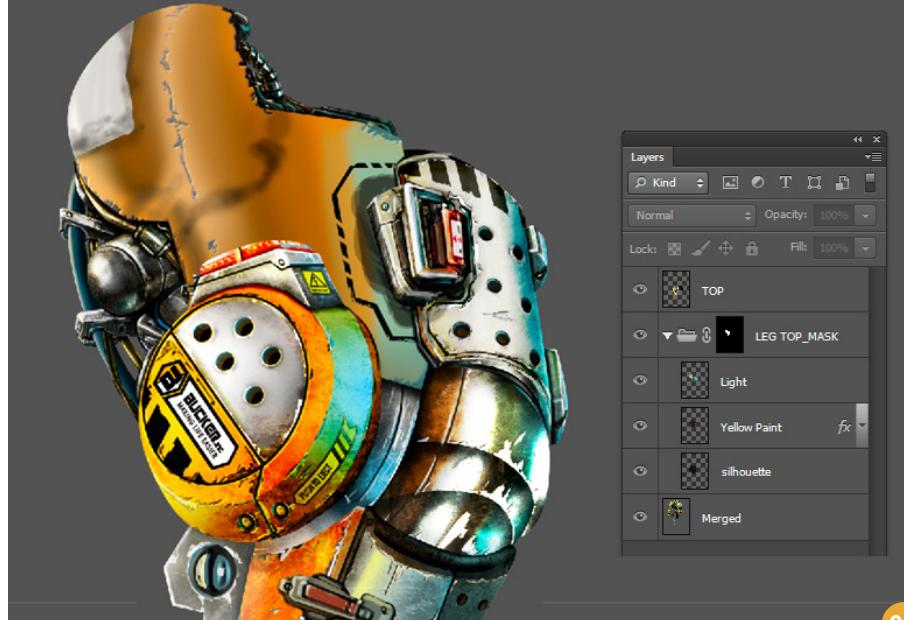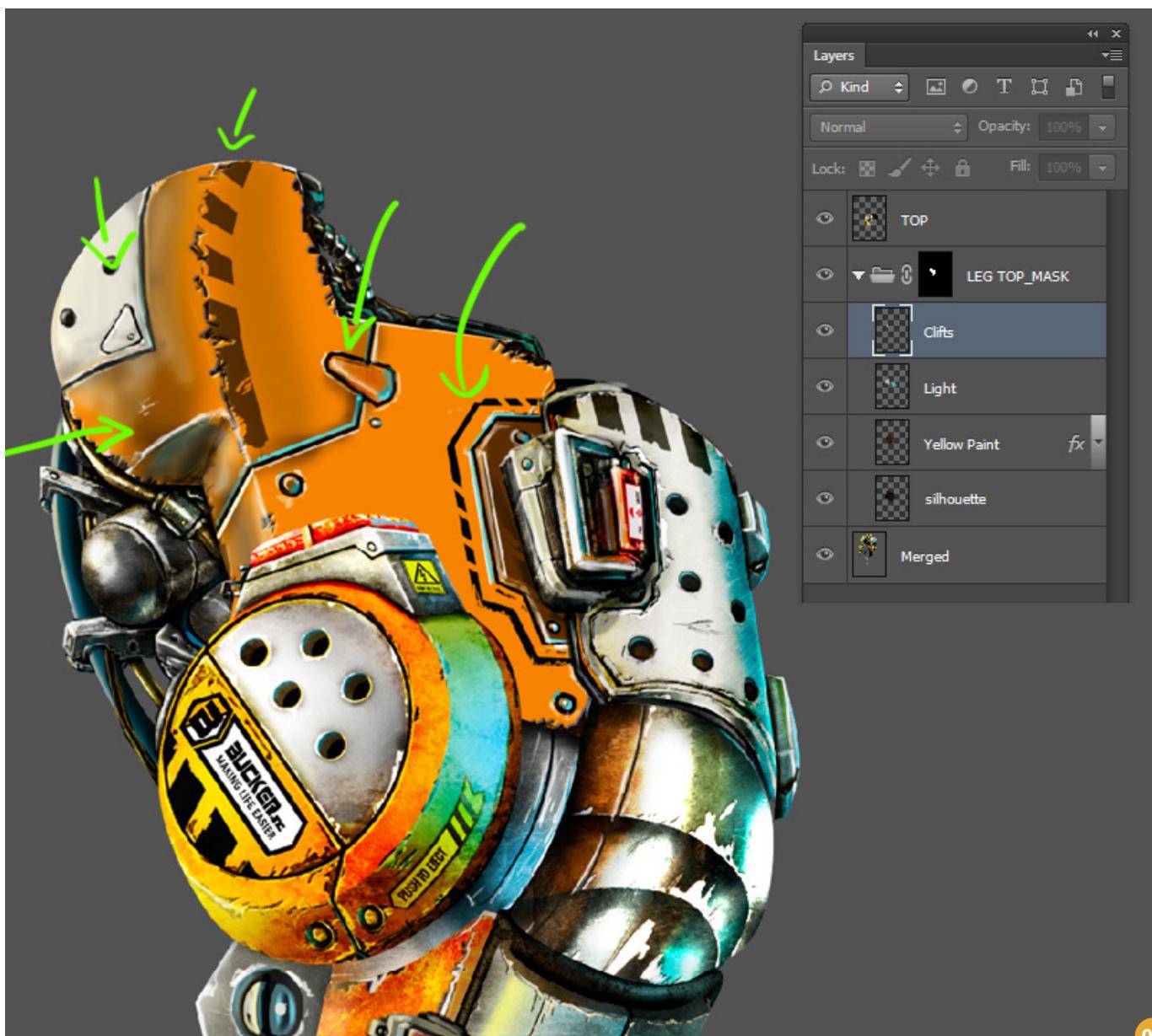
03 The basic structural base I used to begin my painting

04 The first image has basic color, the second one with lights and shadows

05 Applying scratched areas in the right zones

**06** Applying scratches to create a realistic effect

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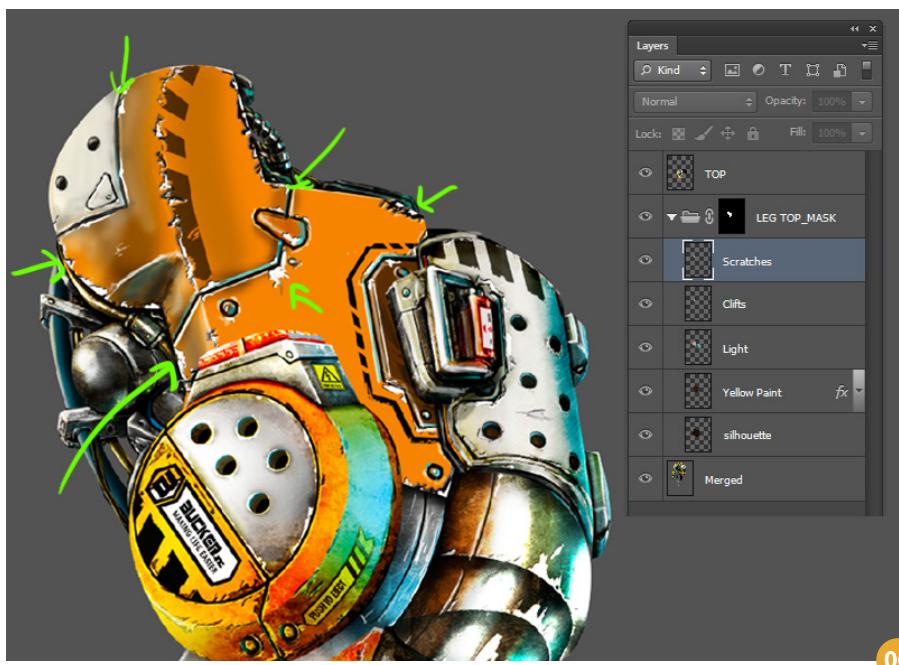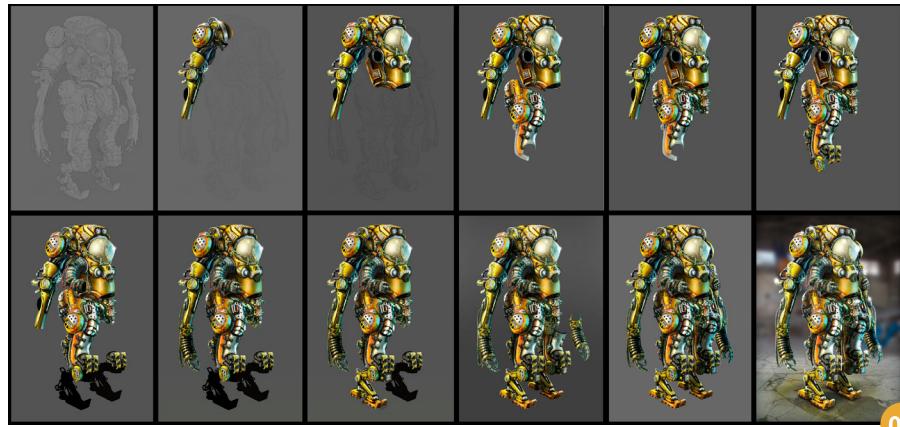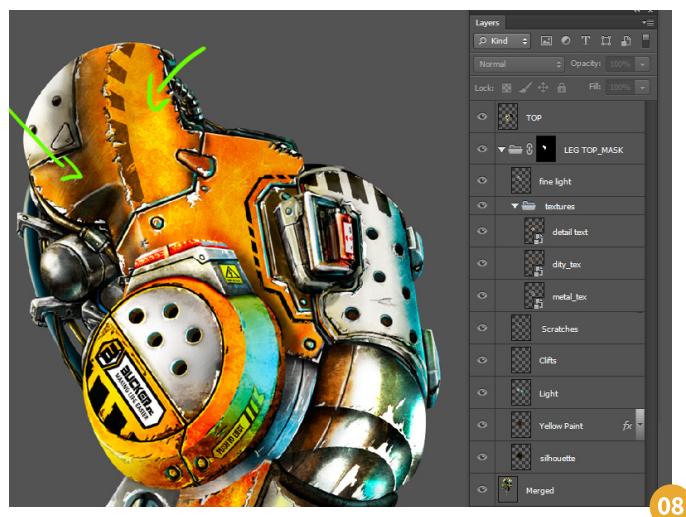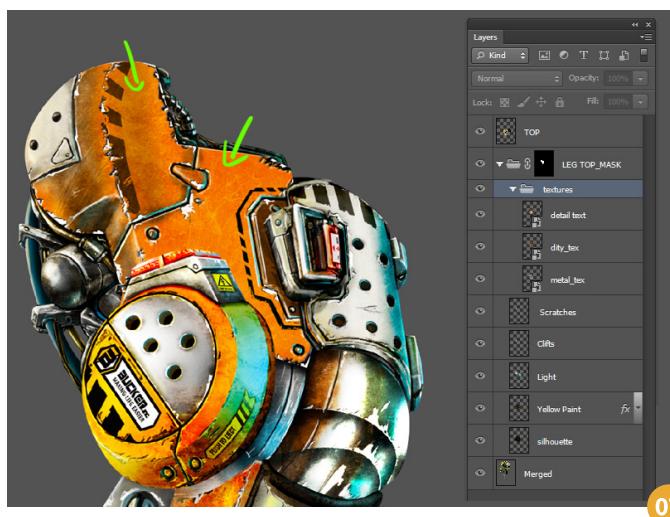
07 **Applying textures:** I created a folder inside the mask and named it Textures, and then copied the three textures in question from the library. First I applied the metal one, then the dirt one, and finally the detail. I had to respect this order throughout the entire painting in order to get a consistent result.

08 **Refine the illumination and the decals:** When the piece was painted, I applied one last Overlay layer of Light Refinement, which raised the tones of the different materials. I then applied more shadows and dirt in the grooves, and added different decals where they were needed, (like an electricity warning).

09 **Finish the robot:** In order to finish the model, I had to repeat every step for each piece. Every time I finished a piece, I had to fuse the folder of each and maintain the Mask layer, so at the end I could apply the effects to the whole image through one big mask.

10 **Designing the background:** Once I had finished the model, I had to apply a big texture as the background. I found an image of an industrial area and blurred it with Gaussian Blur. Then I had to apply a cement texture to the floor.

11 **Integrating the background:** In order to integrate the robot to the background, I had to duplicate the robot, invert it, fill it with black color, and deform it in order to create the shadow. I then duplicated the robot and inverted it again to create the floor reflection. I adjusted the opacity and erased it to make it perfect. Then I drew two circles with a Normal and Soft brush with a dark color, deformed them and applied them under the parts that are in contact with the floor. (I also adjusted the opacity for each case).

After that, I applied a general mask to the robot, and a gradient from black to transparent from the base upwards, giving weight to the object. Finally, I created a superior layer, and applied color gradients – one in each direction – in Soft Light mode. ●

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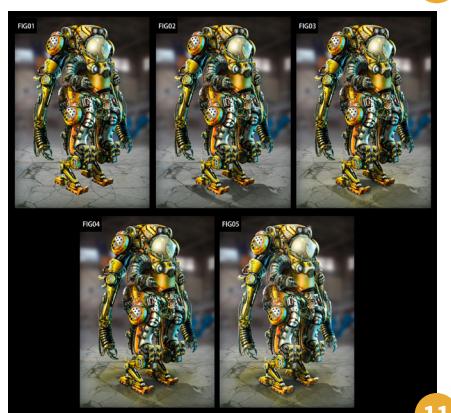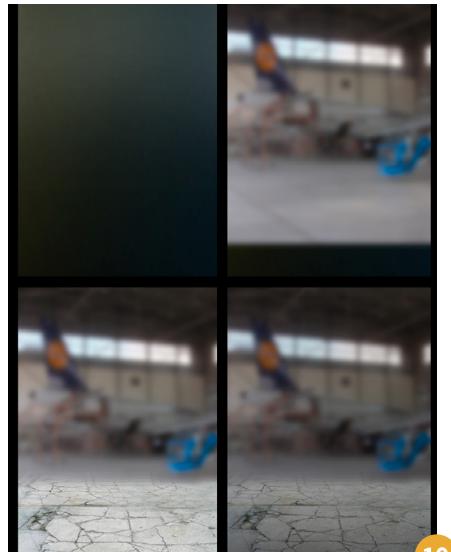
07 Showing the order of the layers´ distribution

**08** The image with refined illumination and decals

09 The evolution of my image

10 The process of creating the background using a industrial-themed image

11 Adding finishing touches to the image

The Artist

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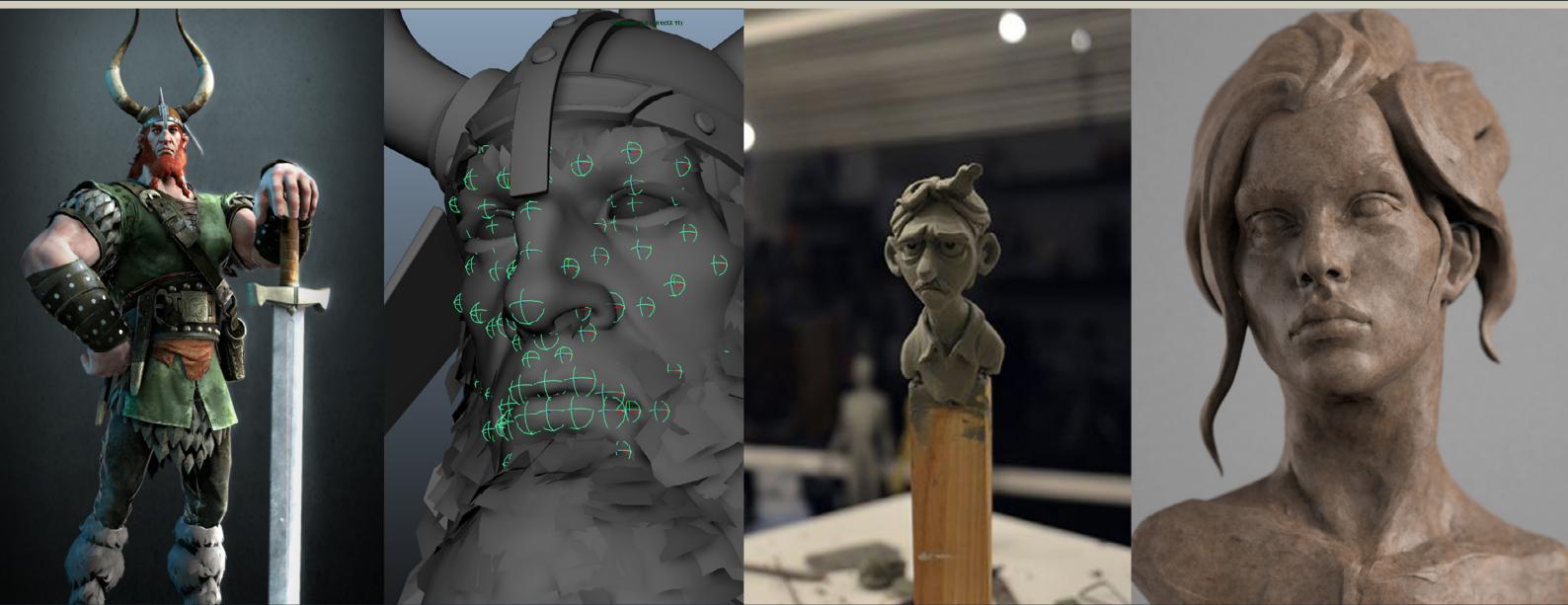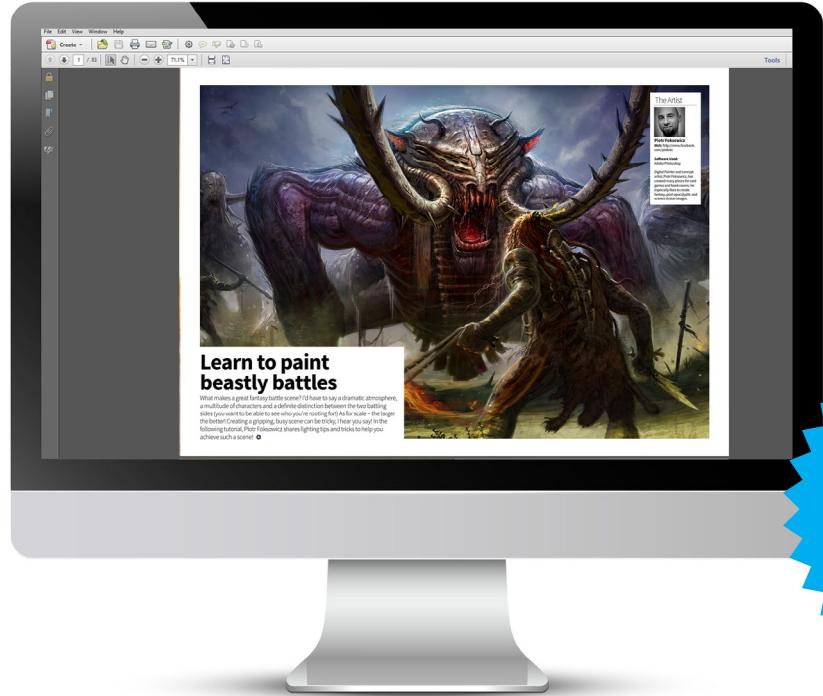
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The Artist

Dima Goryainov
Web: dgvisual.com

Software Used:
Google SketchUp, Photoshop

Dima Goryainov is a Seattle-based concept artist and illustrator who focuses on environmental design. His most recent projects include working at Microsoft Studios/Turn 10 on the visual development-side of the newest Xbox One title, *Forza Motorsport 5*.

Create hard-surface environments

Concept artist and illustrator, Dima Goryainov demonstrates using Google SketchUp to block in 3D elements to aid the composition and lighting of a hard-surface sci-fi scene ▶

Read on to discover Dima's tips and techniques for creating hard-surface scenes…

Perhaps it's because I'm not the biggest fan of flying, but there's something really eerie to me about seeing an airplane broken down into parts; probably because I prefer seeing the entire thing in one piece. I wanted to convey this feeling with an environmental design piece that focused on dramatic lighting to communicate a dark, mysterious mood. While my approach differs at times due to specific assignments and deadlines, in this tutorial I will cover the process I typically use for a more detailed, hard-surface environment.

I will be using SketchUp as a starting point and then move into Photoshop for the paint-over. The first thing I always consider when starting on a new design is the story and mood that I'm trying to communicate. In this particular image, the story revolves around some sort of aircraft that has been disassembled and left untouched for some time – perhaps an unused prototype. I wanted to do something that had a sci-fi element to it, yet retained other elements that would be easily recognizable.

Next, I consider how the player will interact with the environment if it were to be actually built. Though the space doesn't necessarily suggest immediate combat, there are still objects that could be used for cover, suggesting the possibility of something lurking in the shadows. Since this next generation of gaming will be taking advantage of more advanced lighting, atmosphere and particle tech, I wanted this environment to also focus on these features in order to further immerse the player into the story.

01 **Reference gathering:** As most tutorials already point out, it's important to gather various references before starting on an image as it allows your design to be much more believable.

Because I had a good idea of where I wanted this piece to go from the very beginning, I didn't spend as much time on this step and went straight to CGTextures (**www.cgtextures.com**) to pull up some photos that I would then use throughout the concept. I will often spend a couple of hours gathering the right references; for example, if I have to design something within a specific architectural style I will make sure to become fairly familiarized with its elements.

In addition to this, I usually have Tumblr pulled up on my second monitor so that I can scroll


01
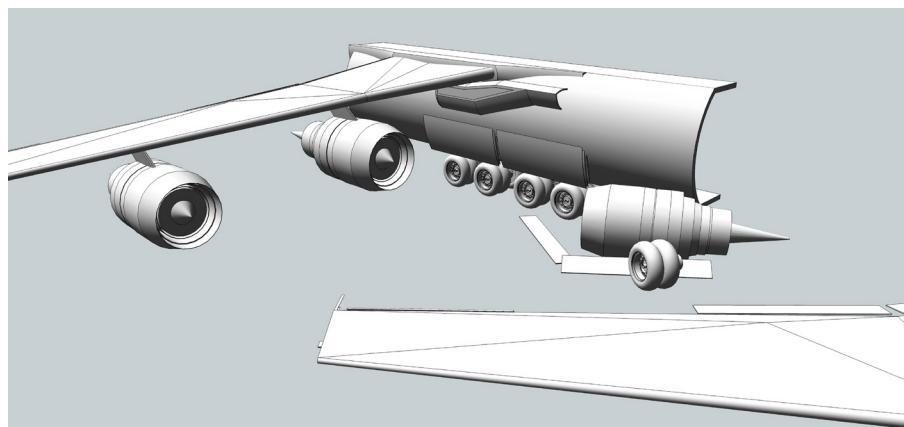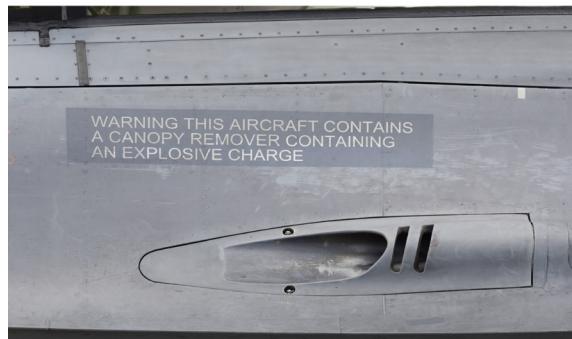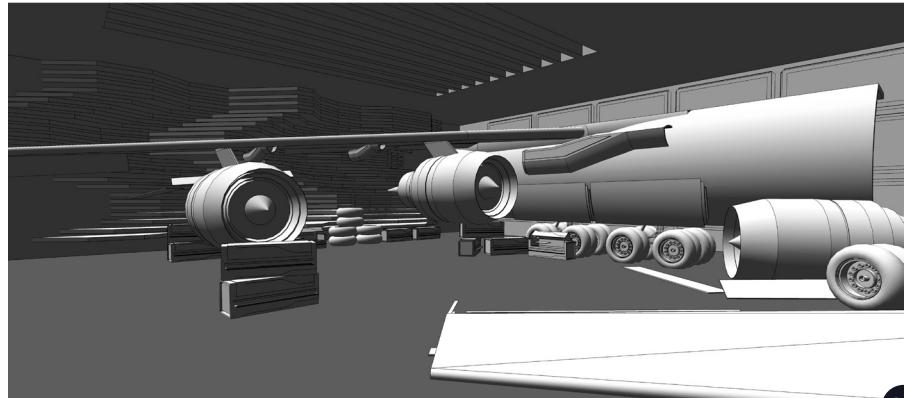
through various inspiration while I work (this can sometimes backfire and instead be distracting).

02 **Base model:** Because this was a hard-surface environment, the use of 3D software was really beneficial. I quickly blocked in part of the fuselage and the wing, knowing that those parts would be mostly covered up in the final image. I then spent a little more time on the engine and the landing gear, referencing

02

the photos I had saved. Since this was more of a sci-fi scene and wasn't even the entire plane, I took some creative liberties with the placement of those parts without focusing too much on the precise aerodynamics of the craft.

Lastly, I moved on to the surrounding space. Again, I knew that a lot of those parts would be cast in shadows so I didn't worry too much about the detail here, opting instead for some
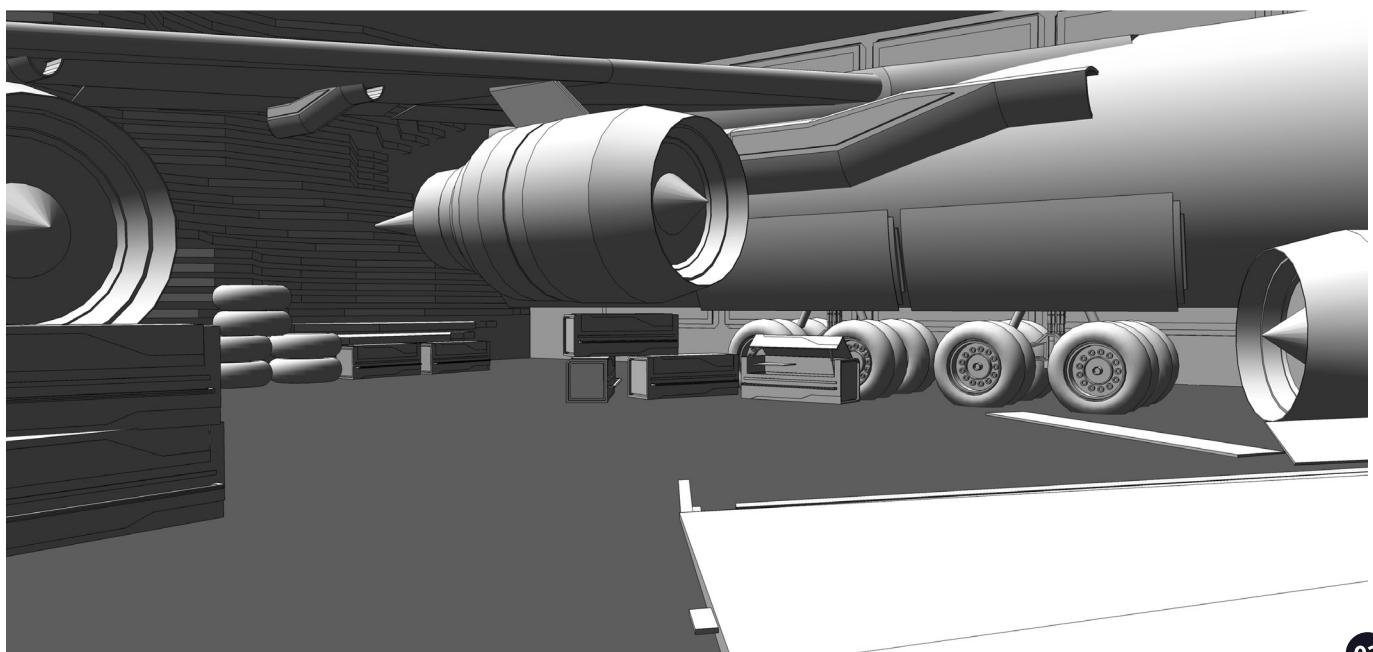
interesting shapes that I could then bring out of the darkness using soft lighting in Photoshop.

The overall amount of detail at that stage also depended on my deadline. Since this was a personal piece, I decided to go for a more detailed model. A simple block-in using basic shapes to set up perspective and composition will work just fine if time is of the essence.

03 Composition: After the base model was finished, I picked my composition. When I am working on a more organic scene, this is where I would do several black and white thumbnail sketches. Since this was a hard-surface environment though, I could quickly experiment with many different camera angles while always maintaining proper perspective. This is a huge advantage of working in 3D first. This has also been very useful in a studio environment as I can actually sit with my art director and we can discuss many different compositions while moving around the environment in real time.

I chose a composition that clearly defined the focal point, while showing enough of the surrounding environment to maintain interest and intrigue. I also decided to cut through some of the elements around the border, in order to keep them yet retain some of the mystery.

04 Splitting the model into layers: After I had chosen my composition I was ready to bring my model into Photoshop. If I was using someone else's model or an in-game screenshot, I would go straight to the paint-over process. ▶
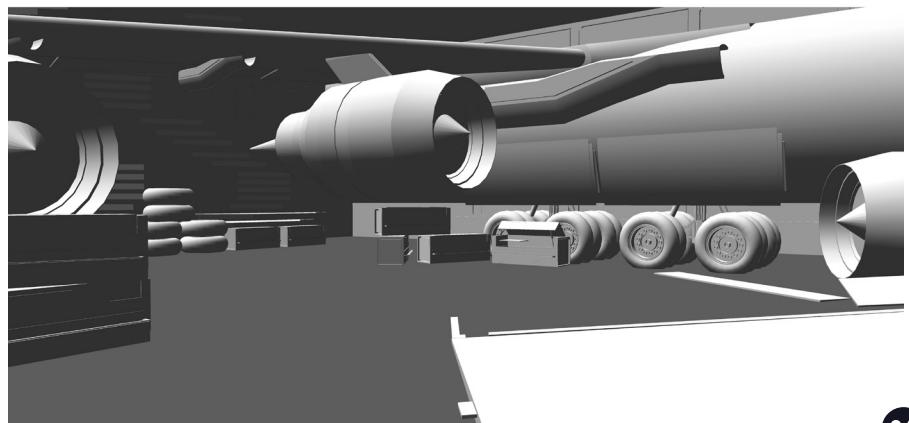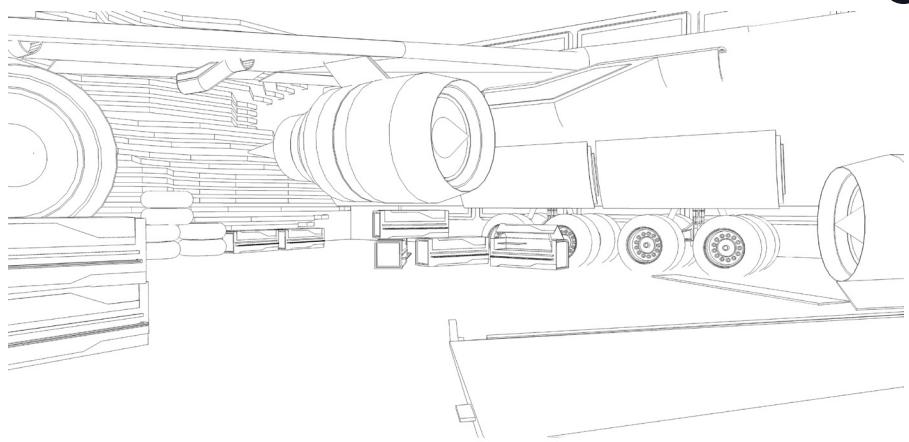
01 Good references will push the believability of the artwork

02 SketchUp is a great software for concept artists because it allows you to quickly block out your scene without focusing too much on the technical side of 3D

03 Using a base model automatically gets you thinking in a 3D space and allows you to solve several challenges before even beginning the painting process

04 There are countless ways to achieve the same result using different programs. Experiment with different workflows and find the one best suited for you
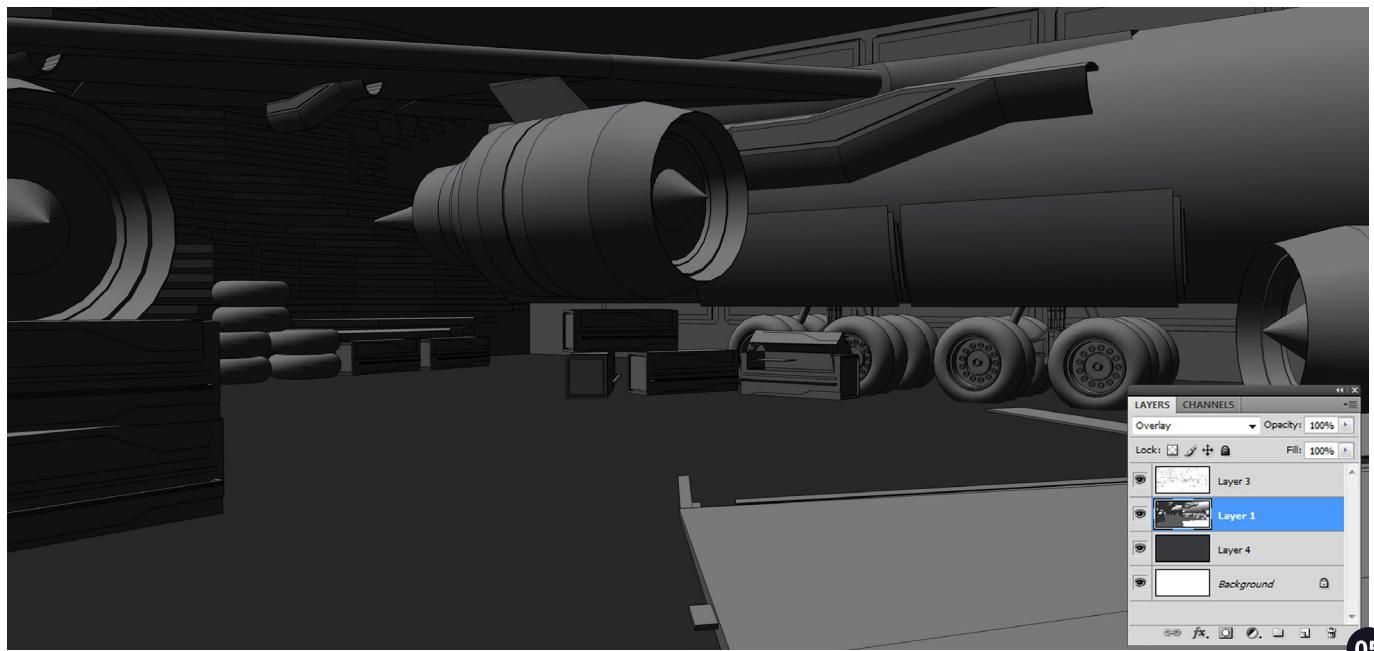
However, since I built my own base, I added an extra step to give myself a better foundation for the final painting. Instead of exporting the entire model out of SketchUp, I exported it in two parts. The first part was just the lines. I did this by using the styles panel at the top, choosing the 'Hidden Lines' option. Next, I exported just the values. I switched the style back to 'Engineering Style' and then went to View > Edge Style > Uncheck Edges. This hid the lines and left just the values of the model visible.

05 **Importing into Photoshop:** Once in Photoshop, I began by choosing my background color. I knew that the environment was going to be pretty dark so I went with a darker gray to start. I then imported my SketchUp value layer and placed it above the background, setting the layer blending mode to Overlay. This applied my base values to my base color. Next, I brought in the line layer and placed it above the value layer, setting the blending mode to Multiply.

The line layer was only used in the beginning to help me better visualize the individual parts of the environment, as well as design any other elements before beginning the painting. After my bigger shapes were filled in, I turned the lines off. The value layer stayed on throughout, giving me a nice base to build on. Anything that I wanted to be affected by this Overlay layer was painted beneath it, retaining the values set by my model. Anything new added to the scene was painted above it. If I wasn't using a 3D base to start my painting, I would paint in some loose highlights and shadows manually so that I would get a nice lighting foundation early on.

06 **Color block-in:** Next I began to separate my main objects by blocking in the major colors. I also applied some of my photo textures using the Overlay blending mode. Additionally, I wanted to start developing my lighting as early as possible, so I began to paint some broad shadows around the environment to bring the focus to the engine focal point.

I then used a large, soft white brush on a new layer set to Overlay and painted in some loose highlights. Afterwards, I tweaked the opacity on these layers so that the lighting wasn't too

07

> ## "The shape of the shadow suggests what the opening looks like without actually having to show it"

hot right away. I like to gradually build up my highlights throughout the process to make sure that the painting stays balanced.

07 **Another lighting pass:** I continued to refine the light around the focal point and added some more textures. I also did a broad Ambient Occlusion pass and painted in some dark shadows around where some of the various surfaces met. In order to add a bit more mystery to the aircraft, I painted a tarp that covers the majority of the fuselage, leaving only a small space exposed. The viewer can then draw their own conclusion about what's underneath based on the parts that are left showing.

Lastly, in this step, I painted some lighting on the floor to show that some light was coming through an opening in the ceiling. In this case, the shape of the shadow suggests what the opening looks like without actually having to show it. Intricate shadows can also be set up in the 3D phase and exported out as a separate layer.

08 **Adding detail around the focal point:** Using a combination of painting and photo texturing, I added a bit more detail to the engine. Overall, this part needs to have a higher detail density than the surrounding environment to help draw the viewer's eye. The same was applied to the tarp and the landing gear as the image progresses, though to a slightly lesser extent as they are secondary focal points. The rest of the environment was left a bit looser. ▶

08

⚡ PRO TIP
Keep the end goal in mind

When creating concept art, place yourself in the mindset of the player. Imagine how you would interact with your design if you were actually in it. Different game mechanics can often influence your environment. For example, if the player is able to freely move around the space then consider how different props will look from different angles. Or if the area is meant to be moved through quickly, such as a hallway during a chase sequence, think about how you can achieve the best visual impact given that constraint. Overall, these constraints tend to push your creativity and lead you to some interesting results. Problem solving is part of the fun.

05 If using this step, make sure not to box yourself in with the values set by your model and don't be afraid to paint over them giving yourself more room for happy accidents

06 Make sure to experiment with different blending modes when applying textures as it can sometimes lead to unpredictable results… in a good way

07 Keeping a balance between what is exposed and what is hidden to convey the right mood in this scene

08 A balance of detail is important to any painting. Some space should be left so that the viewer can rest their eyes

Rays from the ceiling were then cast over the engine for some drama, which I refined later.

This space needed to show some aging as well, so loose textures were applied to the floor for some variation; as well as a pile of garbage off in the corner.

09 Refining the cast lighting: In this step, the lighting from the floor was continued onto the aircraft. I also added some bloom for more atmosphere, as well as some specular highlights on some of the objects.

For this scene, I wanted to maintain a high contrast between the light areas and the dark, leaving a hard edge around the cast lighting. Other details were left to drop off into the

shadows. On the landing gear, for example, enough mechanical parts were showing without exposing the entire system.

10 Adding atmosphere and particles: This is one of my favorite parts of the painting process. Adding atmosphere and particles to a painting really pushes the mood forward, but in a game it also helps to bridge the gap between the player and the static environment. Adding things that move to an otherwise still scene will help the player feel more seated in the world instead of existing as two separate parts.

I pictured the player actually interacting with the atmosphere; kicking up dust and influencing the motion of the thin smoke. Streams of liquid,

which the player can pass through, flow from some mechanical parts.

In addition, some cables hang from the ceiling while others are sprawled over the ground. These would also be interacted with.

11 Adding decals: In this step, I added various decals and accents to the machinery. This layer of detail further pushed the believability of this world. I wanted the mechanical parts to feel like they were actually manufactured; adding numbers, warnings, and symbols. Some were taken from photo references, while others were created with a variety of fonts. This is an easy way to add a little more density to the objects that I want the viewer to pay closer attention to.
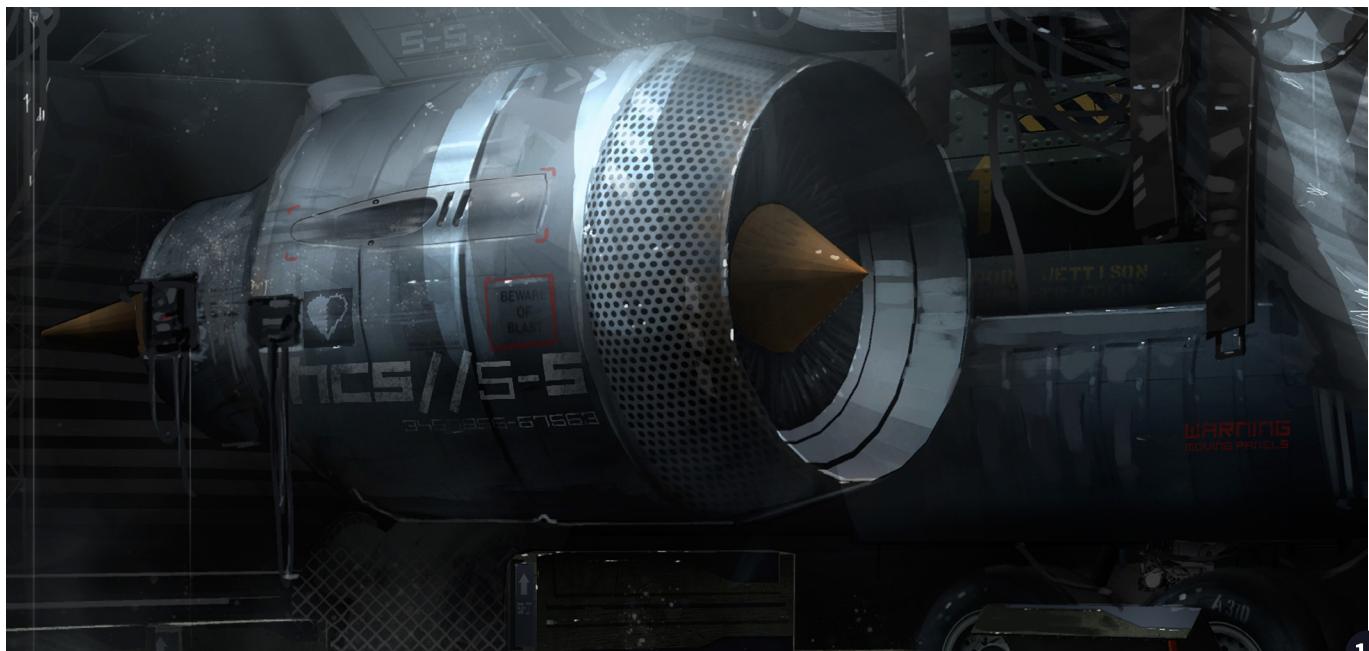
12 **Final lighting adjustments:** I used some different adjustment layers to tweak the contrast and colors of the image. I wanted the temperature of the shadows to feel a little cooler. In the dropdown menu of the Selective Color Adjustment, I chose black and then moved the yellows slider down just a bit, giving me the temperature I was looking for.

Next, I used Levels to bump up the contrast a little. I felt that some of the highlights got too blown out after this change, so I painted a mask over those areas to bring it back down. Then I played with the layer opacity to get the right balance. Finally, I wanted the lighting at the top and on the floor to be just a bit stronger. I created another Levels layer and masked out most of the environment, except for the areas I wanted to enhance. This could have also been done using a brush set to Overlay.

13 **Final image:** At that point, the painting was pretty much finished. I stepped away from it for a little bit and came back later to look at it with a fresh pair of eyes. Often, I will notice things that need to be tweaked, so this step is pretty important. This time I felt that some of the cables were getting lost in the shadows, so I painted some more specular highlights onto them to bring them out and to give the place a slightly damper feel. This pushed the image to where I wanted, so I decided to go ahead and call it done. ●

09 Leave certain areas in the dark, or use shadows, so that the viewer or player is left with some questions

10 Strong atmosphere will make the player feel as if they're actually a part of the world they inhabit

11 Adding more subtle detail will increase the believability of your design

12 One of the last steps for every painting is to experiment with adjustment layers to enhance the lighting

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Freelance illustrator Serge Birault is well known for his perfectly painted pin-ups. Since releasing his first Art Of book last year, he has been working on several images and won many new awards for his top-quality work.

DIGITAL ART MASTER:

My Little Lemmy

by Serge Birault

Pin-up master, Serge Birault shares his unique and instantly recognizable style with us, as he demonstrates how to paint a breathtakingly realistic image with a fun fictitious twist! ▶

Introduction

Hyperrealism and photo reproduction is not usually my goal when painting an image. It's not a very creative process and you're not free to do what you want. However it is a very good exercise and I learned a lot while painting this picture, for example I discovered a new way to paint skin.

My model was my beloved Chloé. She's a big fan of Motorhead, so I decided to add a funny element in the form of a Lemmy doll, who is the front man of the band. It was interesting to add a fictitious part to a very realistic painting. The idea was to add a bit of advertising parody relating to a well-known pony toy.

Working with photo reference

In order to do a very detailed picture you will need to work on a large scale and resolution, at least A3 format and 300 dpi. If your computer is not very powerful, don't forget you can assign more RAM to your software. If you are trying to achieve realistic results take your time. You cannot paint a photorealistic painting in a few hours. I spent more than 50 hours on this one.

Using a photo reference is not simple because you quickly realize you have to push the realism more and more. The most difficult step lies in finding good contrast which is far more important than color. An effective and simple technique is
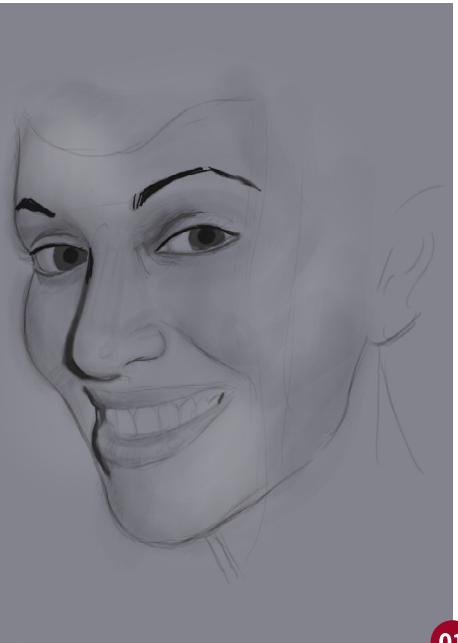
to desaturate your photo. It's the easiest way to compare your painting to your reference.

My favorite tool is the Soft Round brush. With low opacities (under 20%) you can create very soft gradients. Picking colors from the photo is not a good idea, especially for skin tones. Skin tones are too complex to use this approach. As usual, I created a lot of layers and then merged them once I was satisfied with the result.

The face and the breasts

The sketch was very simple – I just tried to create good proportions. I adjusted the original sketch as I developed the image; for example the left eye was not in the right place (**Fig.01**).

I created a tint area with a basic brush then tried to adjust the contrast. As you can see in **Fig.02** the skin tones are a little bit strange so I added red, blue and green. Olive green has been used in paintings for a long time to achieve the correct
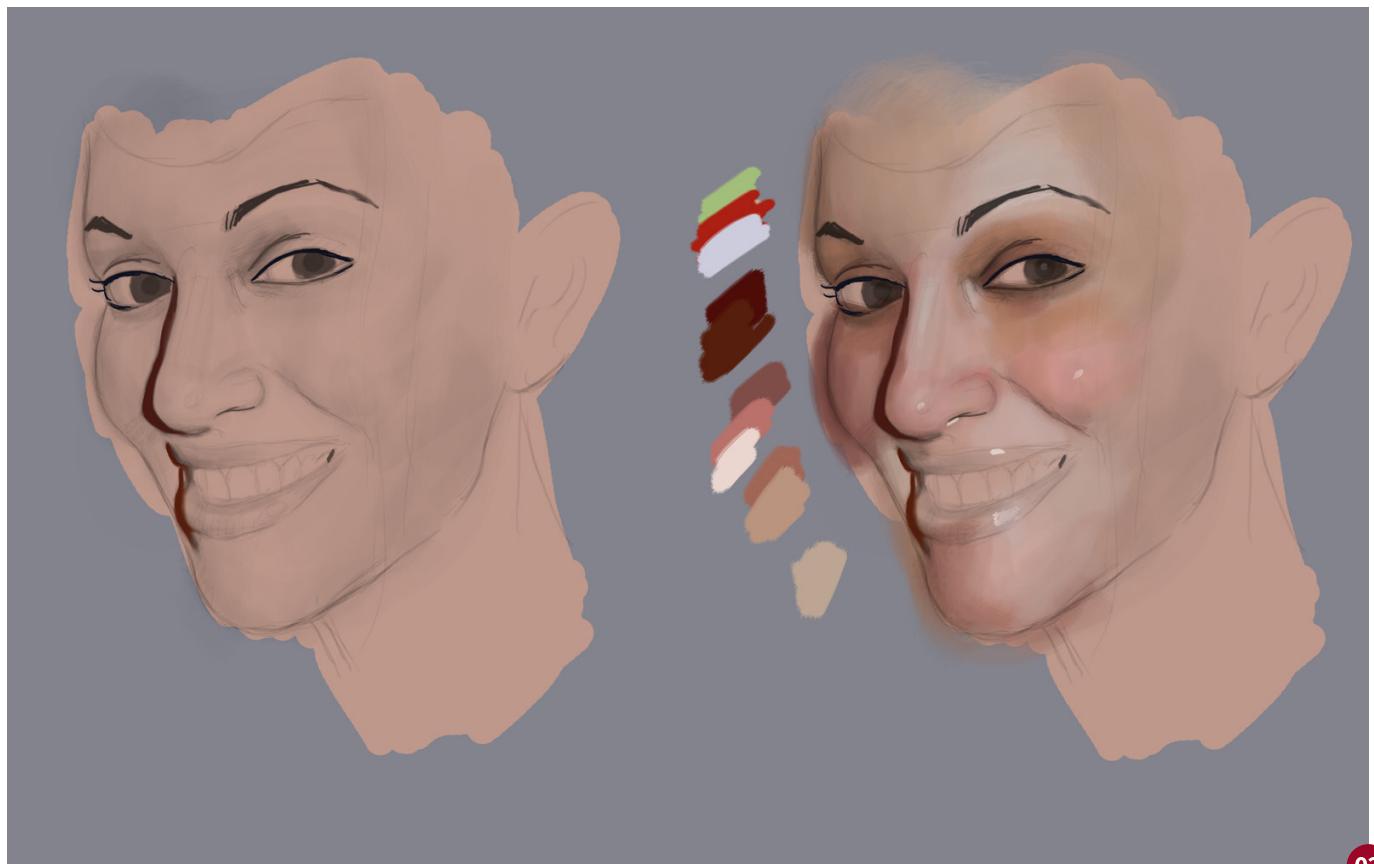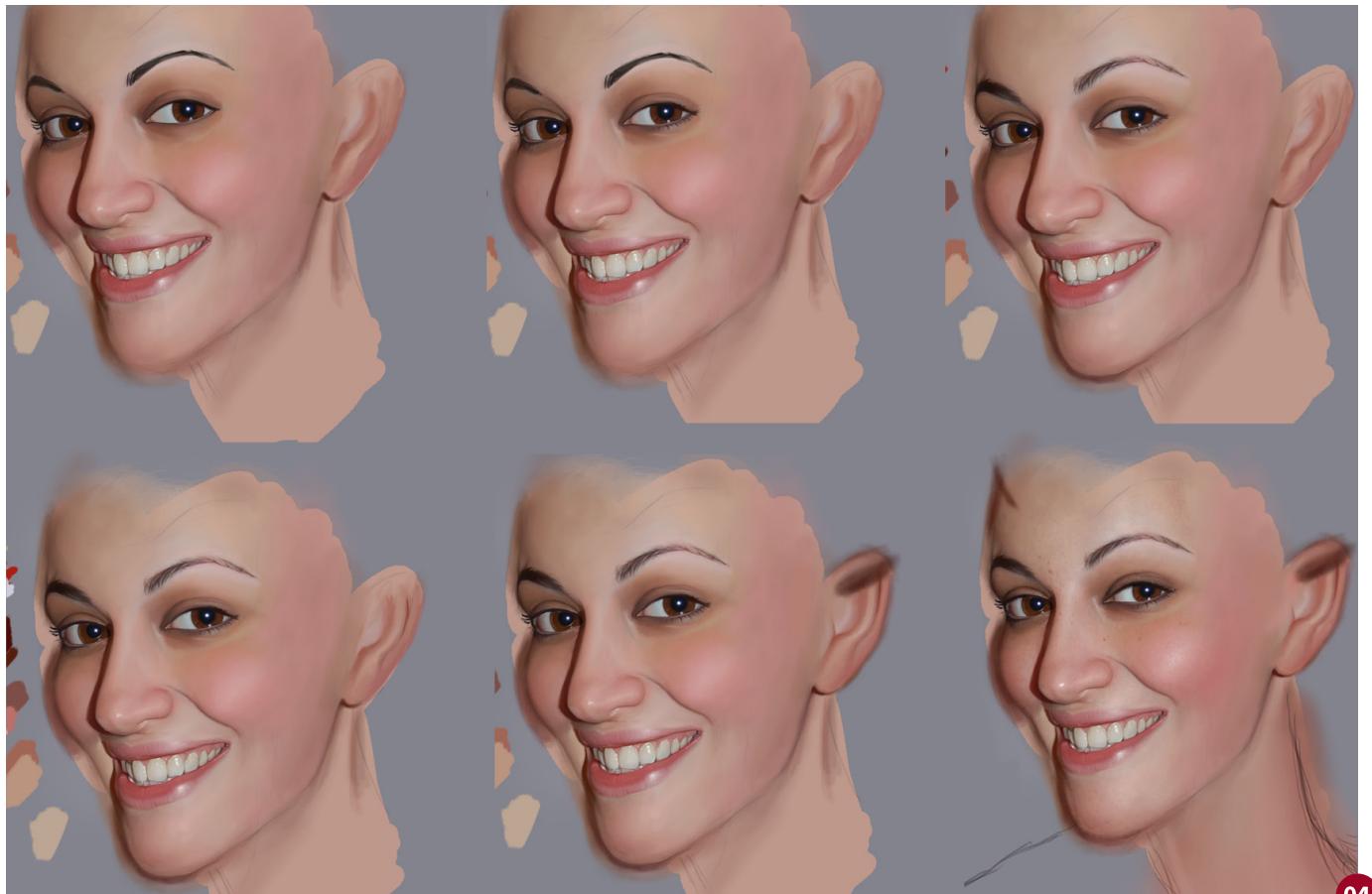
skin tones. Bouguereau, for example, achieved incredible flesh tones with this color.

The eyes and the shadow of the nose were the darkest parts of the face, so I started with this and then worked on the mouth and teeth. The eyes and teeth are very reflective and as the lighting was very strong the reflections were close to white (**Fig.03**).

Once you have found your darkest and brightest tones, you just have to adjust your middle tones. This however is a long process (**Fig.04**). The final step on the skin is the texture. I find that a very good brush for painting this is the Dry brush. With a low opacity and various tones it's very simple to create realistic skin, but of course, it takes time (**Fig.05**). The breasts were done using the same technique. The last thing I did at this point was to add the shadow cast by the hair.

The T-shirt

I took several photos to help me paint the T-shirt. I didn't copy one specifically because the focal ▶
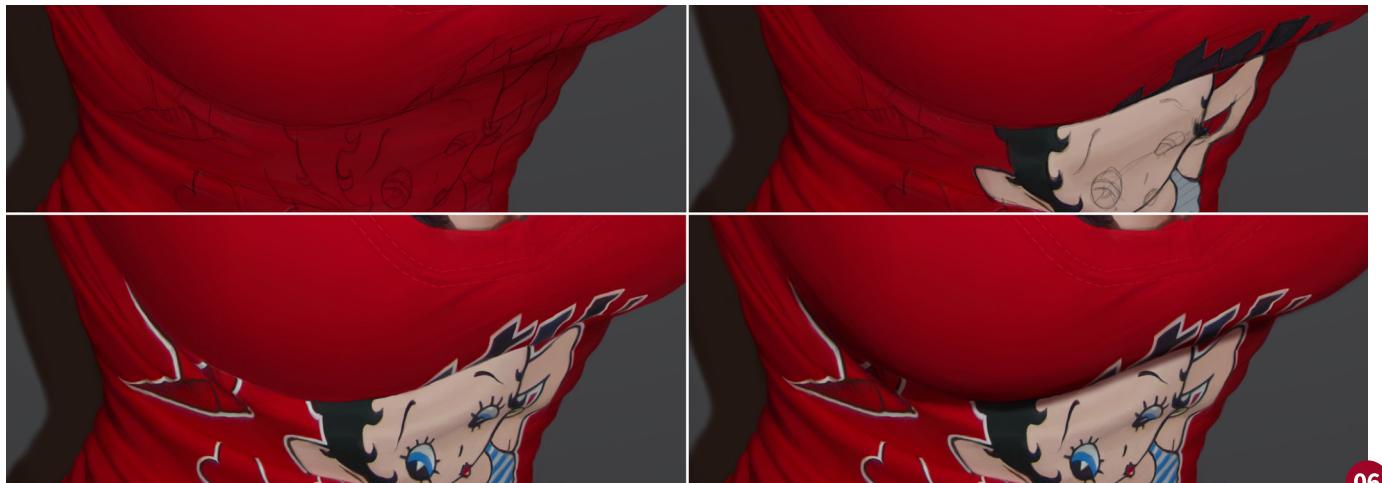
point of my painting was quite different to that of the photos. I needed a lot of layers here so I could add details little by little. Strangely, this was not an easy step. The creases on the T-shirt and the deformation of the pattern were not simple and required several attempts before I became satisfied with the result (**Fig.06**).

The hair
Realistic hair doesn't take too long to do (about eight hours) and it is quite easy. Just create a dark area and paint the hairs one by one. Yes, I know it's boring, but I have never found a better way of doing it (**Fig.07**).

Usually the basic Soft Round brush is good for painting hair, but this time I tried a pencil Ditlev brush (you can easily find them to download on the internet). The result is less linear and crisp but that doesn't matter as much when the brush is so small. Every hair is created using a brush of one or two pixels in width. The tones are very dark so a white Overlay layer is useful when adding in some detail (it also adds contrast).

The hands, the arm and the tattoos
The hands were a real nightmare (at least the right one was). I did them the same way as I did the face, but I restarted four of five times. Even with good references, hands are one of

most complicated parts of the human body to paint (**Fig.08**). The tattoos were done on several different layer types set at different opacities and the darkest areas were created with a deep-blue rather than a black.

The little Lemmy
I started Lemmy by searching for some references of his face on the internet. As he's quiet famous it was easy. The idea was to paint him as a caricaturized toy. Lemmy has a lot of well-known features; his beard, his hat and his warts for example. The plastic face was done quite quickly; I just had to adjust the contrast to make it work with the rest of the picture (**Fig.09-10**).
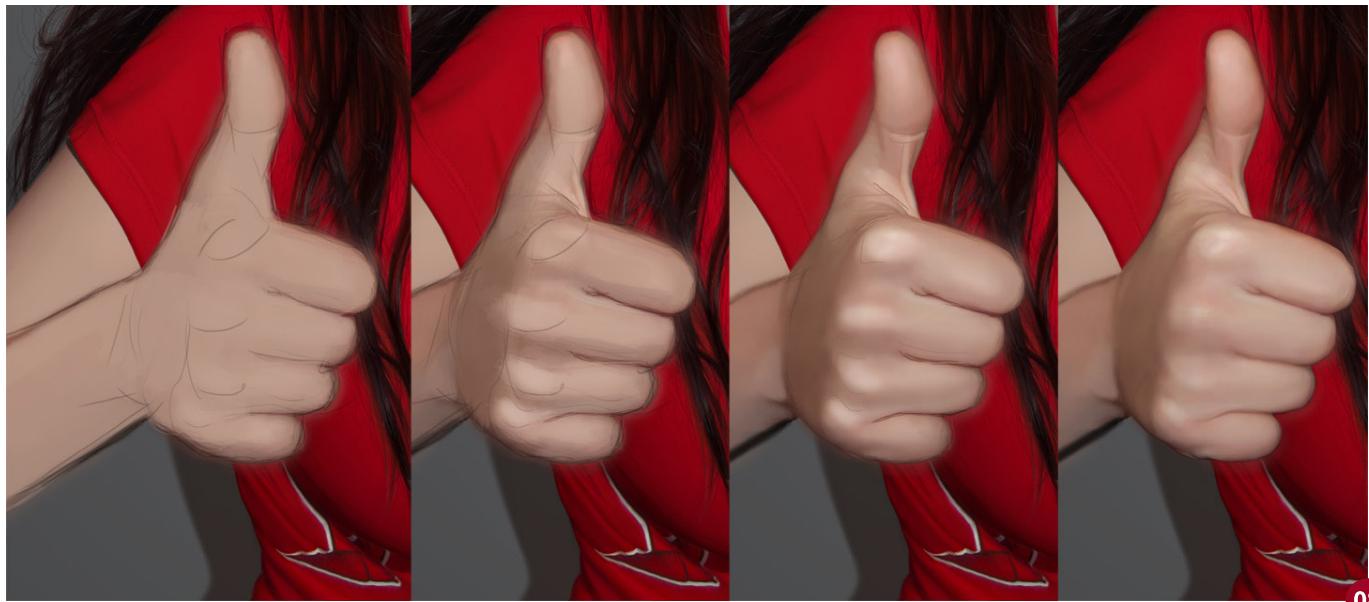
Adjustments and text

I wanted my picture to have an old-school touch so I changed the tones a little bit while trying not to affect the contrast I was happy with. Chloé is not only beautiful, she's a great designer too so she helped me with the text and chose the font.

Last words

This picture was more about technical stuff compared to a creative process, but I'm quite happy with the result. I created a lot of photorealistic images with my good old airbrush when I was younger and I wanted to see if I was able to do the same with digital software. I posted it in some of the CG forums and people still think it's a photo, so the result seems to be convincing! ●

my little
Lemmy

The Artist

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Requires 2 x bottles of Jack Daniel's (not included)

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